

RECORD OF WORTENIA WAR

ウォルテニア 戦記



Ryota Hori

保利亮太

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RECORD OF WORTENIA WAR

– Wortenia Senki –

- VOLUME 2 -

**Rozeria Kingdom Civil War
(II)**

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[Hasutsuki]



「姉様……亮真様、

すごく考え込まれているけど……

晩餐会の開始時間が過ぎているのを

忘れてないよね？」

サーラが小さな声で傍らの姉へ耳打ちする。

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急げ！

亮真はサツと体を起こすと、
リオネ達へ守備の持ち場を割り振る。

分かりました。

御子柴亮真。

貴方へ二千の兵を預け

先発隊の指揮を

任せます――



「お爺様！
何故あのような事を！」

咲夜は抑えていた苛立ちを
嚴翁へとぶつける。

RECORD OF WORTENIA WAR
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戦記

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HOLY
QWILTANTIA
EMPIRE



KINGDOM OF HELNESGOULA

O'LTORMEA EMPIRE

SOUTHERN KINGDOMS

KINGDOM
OF
XARGODA

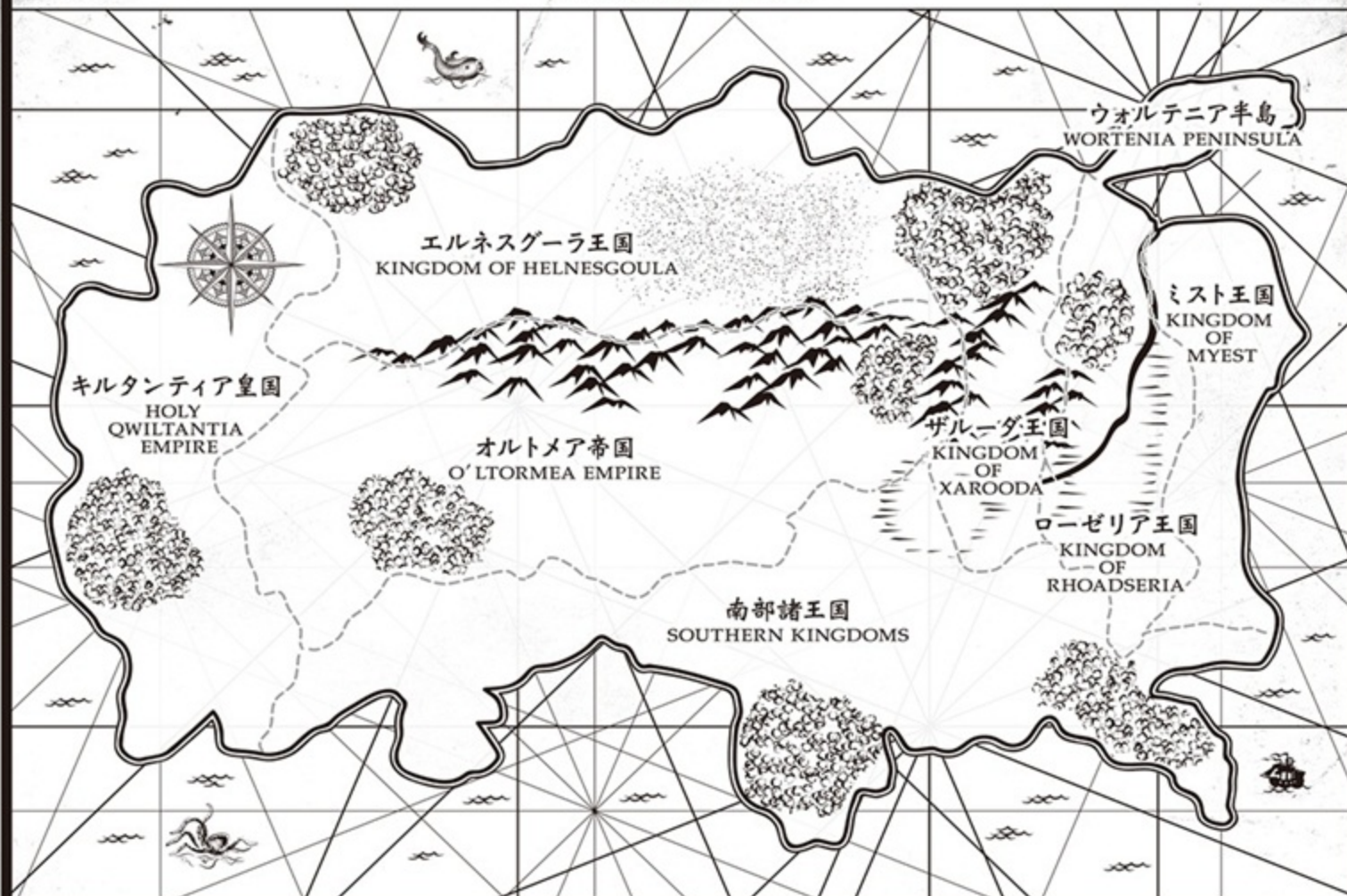
KINGDOM
OF
RHOADSERIA

KINGDOM
OF
MYEST

WORTENIA PENINSULA

WORLD MAP of 《RECORD OF WORTENIA WAR》

西方大陸 地図



✧ オルトメア帝国

西方大陸中央部に存在する帝国。覇権主義を掲げ、西方大陸統一に乗り出す。

✧ ローゼリア王国

西方大陸の東部に覇を唱える三国の一つ。豊かな水量を誇るテーベ河のお陰で非常に豊かな穀倉地帯を持つ。西をザルーダ王国に、東をミスト王国に挟まれており、戦乱が絶えない。国政の実権はホドラム將軍とゲルハルト公爵に奪われている。

✧ ザルーダ王国

西にオルトメア帝国と隣接する山岳国家。峻険な山々に囲まれた天然の要害と、豊富に産出される鉄鉱石のお陰で、なんとか帝国の侵略を食い止めている状態。東に隣接するローゼリア王国から輸入される食糧に大きく依存している。

✧ ミスト王国

西でローゼリア王国と隣接する貿易国家。中央大陸とも交易が盛んで、西方大陸最大の貿易都市であるフルザードを支配下に持つ。

✧ エルネスグーラ王国

西方大陸北部を支配する王国。覇権主義を掲げ、中部への侵入を悲願としている。オルトメア帝国とは犬猿の仲。

✧ キルタンティア皇国

西方大陸西部を支配する皇国。オルトメア帝国とは冷戦状態が続く。南部地方への侵攻を画策している。

✧ 南部諸王国

西方大陸南部に群生する小国の総称。西方大陸最大の激戦地帯で、紛争が絶えない。

Chapter 20

Defensive War ①

Day 169 after being summoned to another world.

“Listen up! From here on, the mercenary units must build the defense facility as instructed. Our performance here will be our lifeline! I want everyone to remember that!”

The sun was shining in the middle of the sky. The cloudless sky was so clear as if it is favouring Ryouma's camp.

“““Uoooooooo!”“““

Countless fists are raised up to the sky in response to Ryouma's command.

Before his eyes, there are 2000 knights whom he was put in charge by the princess, and 100 mercenaries led by Lione.

The advance party led by Ryouma has successfully crossed the Thaves River within three days just as they had planned, and now they are building a defensive facility on the east bank of the Thebe River.

This is to enable the other 20.000 troops led by Princess Lupis that will arrive at the Thaves River west bank in four days to cross over.

And for the sake of their survival until the main force arrives.

“There's a high probability that the enemy is already aware of our actions here and is planning to attack! Our time is limited! However, if we can surround our camp with water and fences to some extent before they attack, you guys who are elites should be able to hold them off even if the enemy numbers are 30 times greater than you!”

“““Uoooooooo!!!”“““



Echoing roars followed Ryouma's words.

(Fuuh, at least I have no problem with morale for now. After this, it's just a matter of how much they can prepare as I've instructed.)

After Ryouma's speech had ended and each platoons have returned to their posts, one man remained standing in front of him.

“Mikoshiba-dono. I'll begin the reconnaissance together with 500 Knights.”

Ryouma nodded toward Mikhail's words.

It is dangerous to split a quarter of their force into reconnaissance. However, this is still much better than overlooking the enemy movement and ended up getting a surprise attack.

That is what Ryouma had judged.

“Very well, though I will say this once again; you must only do reconnaissance. Withdraw immediately and do not attempt to engage in battle even if you spot the enemy.”

There's no meaning in reconnaissance if they cannot locate the enemy.

A reconnaissance is an information gathering mission.

Thus there's no need for them to engage the enemy.

“I understand. I don't really approve showing our backs to the enemy, but this is also part of the strategy. I guess there's no other choice.”

Mikhail answered Ryouma in disappointment.

However, because Ryouma was given the authority by the Princess directly, Mikhail has no other choice but to follow his orders.

“I asked of you to do this because you're one of the best, and we can't afford to have too many casualties from this mission. It is not an exaggeration to say this mission's

success depends on your performance, you know?”

It is a demanding role, considering Mikhail's insufficiency in the brain department, but there's no other suitable person than him.

Ryouma has no other choice than to trust Mikhail for it.

“I understand. Well then, please excuse me!”

Mikhail turned his body and walked away after saying that words.

Ryouma looked at the Mikhail's back as he left.

Because there are no capable people around, Ryouma had no choice than to leave it to Mikhail, but later on, Ryouma will find himself regretting this decision.

“Listen up! Just do like how we have trained! And keep your guards up!”

“““O spirits that controls over the earth. Hear our call and transform the land before us !”““

The mercenaries began their chant together with Bolts.

“““Earth Sink!”““

That was a low level earth manipulation magic arts.

When they placed their hands on the surface of the ground, the earth sank simultaneously for about 1 meter in front of the chanters.

“Alright! This is good. The first group of magic users will continue digging the same hole again after you've had your 15 minutes rest! And the second group will check for any mistakes and shall rectify them immediately!!”

“How is your work progressing?”

A voice called out to Bolts who was tasked with the construction work.

Currently, the sun is just about to set.

It has been just over three hours since Bolts had began his work.

A dry moat with 20 meters width and 5 meters depth entered Ryouma's field of vision.

Not to mention that the length is over 500 meters. It was unbelievable for them to achieved it in such a short amount of time.

"Ah! Young master! Well, let's see, I guess we're going to be okay."

Bolts answered him while still facing towards the dry moat.

"But still... Young master really is an amazing person. To come out with such plan."

Bolts' praises were by no mean an exaggeration.

Ryouma had suggested using Earth magic not as a weapon;

But as a tool that will give them an advantage in war.

It was treated the same level as other tools such as swords and spears.

"It's not that big of a deal."

Ryouma lightly brushed off Bolts' praises. However, unbeknown to Ryouma, his idea has in fact revolutionised both the military and the economic world.

The effectiveness of utilising magic arts outside of combat is overwhelming, particularly in the field of construction.

Usually, when Earth Sink is casted, a pit with diameter of 5 meters and depth of 5 meters is created.

No matter how you see it, it is just a simple hole.

Generally it was used offensively to trap enemies by making them fall into it. However, most magic users often overlook this magic art in actual combat.

Since it has a diameter of 5 meters, it would be understandable to think that this magic is a useful attack. The truth is, it hardly has any use in actual combat.

The reason is because your enemy wouldn't simply stand in the same position all the

time.

It would be difficult for someone to predict their opponent's movement and land the spell accurately.

Moreover, despite being 5 meters deep, such depth wouldn't kill someone immediately.

It is also easier to just use other magic arts with higher killing potential rather than Earth Sink.

But now, what would happen when people start to use Earth Sink as a magic art to create a dry moat that can be used to reinforce a defence rather than to create just a pitfall?



"No, young master, you don't understand the significance of your idea at all!"

When someone sees Earth Sink casted as a weapon in a direct battle, they would more or less ignore it.

However, looking at this, if people use it outside of combat, Earth Sink can be useful for a wide range of applications.

It was no wonder for Bolts to praises Ryouma for coming up with such idea.

"Is that so?"

Ryouma tilted his head in contemplation.

From where Ryouma came from, such idea is a no brainer.

On the contrary, he thought that this world people has a very inflexible mind since no one has noticed such thing.

"It is!"

Ryouma shows a wry smile when he saw Bolts who strongly nodded.

"Well this fight will depend on the result of the reconnaissance, I think we won't have

much time left. I can leave this matters to Bolts-san, right? “

“Sure! Leave it to me... Oi! We won't be able to finish the work in time if you don't properly calculate the distance between each other! Please excuse me, young master, I'm going to take a look.”

Even while he was talking to Ryouma, he seems to be properly monitoring the construction progress.

As expected from a veteran warrior.

Ryouma was grateful of how reliable he is.

Monitoring the dry moat construction progress was one of the reasons why Ryouma had come here.

“By the way, where is Sara now?”

“Sara-jou-chan is it?... Hmm..... ah! Over there! She is keeping an eye out just like the young master has ordered huh.”

<TLN: Sara-jou-chan, literally means “Young lady Sara/Miss Sara”>

Blonde hair swayed in the direction where Bolts finger pointed at.

“That means it was that black haired woman huh?”

“Indeed, that is correct!”

Ryouma gazes were directed at the black haired woman who's working next to Sara.

“Because Sara-jou-chan has been watching her properly, I feel a bit relieved!”

“Indeed. Had we got outsmarted by that, it would be pretty bad.”

“Yes... I also know that.”

“If any unforeseen circumstances were to happen, please deal with it appropriately.”

Bolts showed an astonished expression hearing Ryouma's words.

Because in his strategy, she also has a role to play.

Looking at Bolts' expression, Ryouma leaked a small laugh.

“Certainly, I can use her for something. However, there's also a possibility of it being a trap. That's why, if something bad is about to happen, I want Bolts-san to deal with it as you see fit.”

“I understand. Please leave it to me!”

After Ryouma had said those words, Bolts returned to his job once again.

“Now then, next I should check on how Lione is doing...”



“Everything is proceeding according to the schedule!... Well, I will begin our work after Bolts has finished his.”

Lione shouted loudly at Ryouma when she saw him walking toward her direction.

Ryouma smiled at her and lightly waved his hand.

“Are the fences ready? “

“Yes, since we're near the forest, we can get as much wood as we want after all.”

Lione looked at a mountain of fences in front of her.

It was fences made by tying woods together with ropes.

Once Bolts and his team has completed the dry moat, all that left to plant the fences behind the dry moat.

“How about the bridge?

“It is supposedly being prepared right now. We're currently cutting the trees for the material.”

Teams of men go in and out of the forest while bringing back pieces of log.

It seems they are using body strengthening magic arts just like Ryouma had instructed.

Thick trees that usually require a large number of men to carry are being carried just by one man on their shoulder.

Ryouma nodded.

“Don't forget to make sure it has sufficient strength for the cavalry to pass through, alright?”

“Don't worry! I know... I'll make sure to order the guy with experience as a carpenter to lead the construction work. After all, this is an important part of the strategy...”

Lione reassured him.

“Alright, I will leave it to you then.”

Ryouma returned to his tent after saying those words.

For Ryouma, he still has a lot to do right now.



While Ryouma was busy fortifying the defence, Mikhail was approximately 5 kilometers from his position.

One might think that moving 5 kilometers within 3 hours time is slow. However, that is an understatement.

Since his mission is to reconnaissance, it is natural for him to move slowly and carefully in order to avoid being discovered by the enemies.

“Fuuh... for now, there's nothing suspicious, huh?”

“Yes...”

A view of grassy plain is visible in front of them; they should be able to spot any

soldiers approaching from Irachion.

When Mikhail has confirmed that there were no enemy soldiers, he settled down on a rock nearby his feet.

(The future battle will be decided from this skirmish, huh... but that face of his, does he despise me?)

Ryouma's anxious face appeared within Mikhail's mind.

Almost three months had passed since Ryouma and Mikhail met.

On the surface, he seemed to have opened his heart toward Ryouma, but in truth, Mikhail couldn't help but feel dissatisfied toward Ryouma.

Most can be attributed to the fact that Ryouma had killed most of his subordinates during the assassination attempt, but there's also the fact that Princess Lupis had given her trust to Ryouma despite his questionable origins.

(In the first place, what does he think a knight is?!... a knight is a fighting warrior! All these carpenter works should have been left to the likes of farmer!)

For Mikhail who values his pride as a knight highly, Ryouma's current plan does not make him happy.

Certainly, the efficiency is good.

For that, Mikhail admits it.

However, he hates the idea that a knight has to dig up trenches, dry moat and cut trees.

In fact, many Rozeria Knights have the same thought.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that every one of them think alike.

However, because the princess has given Ryouma the authority, they are obliged to follow his orders. Not to mention that he was also the one who thought of a good strategy to go against enemy with overwhelming military force.

For now, the reason why Mikhail had volunteered for reconnaissance job is that it is much better than doing carpentry jobs of cutting woods.

Mikhail himself understood what kind of effect Ryouma's plan will have, and he also should be able to understand why Princess Lupis had placed her trust on him.

However, his pride as a knight ultimately invited jealousy toward Ryouma.

His loyalty toward Princess Lupis is unyielding.

It is comparable to Meltina's loyalty.

However, although right now what Princess Lupis needs most is not a loyal person, but rather a person who can understand strategy.

He would still think it's fine if Ryouma held the same Knight's pride just like him.

But the reality is different.

He knew that Ryouma couldn't be the same as him.

That's why Mikhail envies him.

And his feeling of envy caused him to fall into the darkness.

“Mikhail-sama! There's a smoke up ahead. It's probably the enemy's scout team!”

Mikhail looked surprised after hearing his subordinate report.

“What! The enemy you say!?”

“Yes! Although we still can't confirm the numbers yet, they showed a little movement!”

“What's with you! If you want to make a report, make it clear!”

Following Mikhail's angry voice, his subordinates moved ahead to confirm the information.

(There's not much of movement?... should we verify the numbers first then report to Mikoshiba-dono?)

Despite what he feels, he still thinks of the objective of his mission.

Doing reconnaissance while keeping the soldiers' casualties at the minimum.

Ryouma has clearly outlined the importance of this.

Currently, they only have 2000 knights with them.

It is natural for them to prioritize avoiding battles than trying to reduce enemy soldiers.

However, such train of thought were blown away when Mikhail's subordinates came to report.

“Mikhail-sama! I've confirmed the information! The enemy's numbers are 100!”

“100 you say?! Is that really true?!”

A smirk appears on Mikhail's face.

(100 huh... then that would be only one-fifth of our numbers... no sign of enemy reinforcements nearby... they are probably a reconnaissance unit being sent in advance just like us...)

“Mikhail-sama! Please give us the order to return to report immediately!”

An adjutant proposed that to Mikhail.

Certainly, what he said is correct.

However, there won't be any achievement for them if they return just like that.

That is what Mikhail had in his mind.

(The enemy is a scouting unit. Our numbers are 500. There's no need for us to do battle... yet, if we could reduce the enemy numbers even just a little, it would become advantageous for us later...)

At this point, what Mikhail had in his mind was only about his achievement.

For the chance to make an exploit in battle.

Mikhail shouted and raised from his sitting position.

His eyes were filled with bloodthirst.

“No! Everyone prepare for battle! We will engage them!”

Looking at the battle that is about to happen, Mikhail felt elated.

The ecstatic feeling mixed with his ambition has clouded his judgment.

He had completely forgotten.

What his mission is, and what kind of importance it holds.

This judgment of his would send Ryouma into predicament.

Chapter 21

Defensive War ②

Day 169 after being summoned to another world.

“Listen up! Do not show them any mercy! Crush them completely! We shall show them the power of Rozeria Kingdom's knights!”

Upon receiving Mikhail's order, all 500 knights began to line up on the hill.

They were overflowed with silent tension.

Since the opponent's number was only 100, Mikhail decided to ignore Ryouma's order completely.

When someone ignores their superior's order but manages to win as a result, they are usually forgiven.

But with that, it means Mikhail cannot afford to lose.

It is absolutely unforgivable to ignore orders and fail to achieve anything in return, let alone a complete defeat.

Even Princess Lupis wouldn't show any mercy toward such person.

(I will not lose!)

Inside Mikhail's mind, he can only think of victory.

However, occasionally, having such mindset can make someone to be blind to the truth.

“Chaaarge!!!”

““““Uoooooooooh!!!”“““



Following his command, Mikhail's sword pointed forward, 500 Knights rushed down the hill spreading dust behind their paths.



“What! Say that again!!”

A furious voice erupted from inside the tent.

Ryouma couldn't believe the report that was brought to him by an unknown knight in Michail's unit...

Rather, it was obvious that he was unable to understand it.

“Y-Yes... M-Mikhail-sama's r-reconnaissance un... unit has been des... destroyed c-completely...”

Blood was dripping from the Knight's body, forming a small puddle under Ryouma's feet.

Some of his words were unclear since he was enduring the pain, and some blood got stuck in his throat.

The two Marfisto sisters continued to apply healing magic to him. For everyone who has seen his condition, they knew if the sisters were late by few minutes, he would have died.

He managed to survive and arrived in this place with sheer willpower alone. A normal human would have died from these wounds long before making it here...

Looking into his eyes, one can feel his determination to keep on living.

“Mikhail... why did you... did he die?!”

Ryouma lost his cool and shouted at the man who was at the border of life and death, despite trying his best to calm himself.

The Knight was clearly dying.

It was just a matter of time until the soul leaves the body.

But regardless, he tried his best to convey the important information to Ryouma before his flame of life burned out.

In this sort of situation, the knight should be given utmost respect as he performs his final duty.

For a dying knight, this was considered as the highest honour.

“Mikhail-sama... chased after... Kyle... and charged deep... into the enemy line.”

“Kyle?”

It was a name that Ryouma have heard for the first time.

Ryouma repeated the name inquisitively.

“Y-Yes... Mikhail-sama was commanding... the unit calmly... until he saw that the commander... of the enemy unit is a traitor named Kyle Iruna.”

When Ryouma looked around, the Knights’ faces in his vicinity turned pale.

Ryouma wondered if there was something about this Kyle Iruna guy.

However, this was not the time to ask about it.

“I see... did Mikhail rushed to the enemy to defeat that person?”

Toward Ryouma's words, the wounded Knight tried his best to nodded his head.

Ryouma began to imagine the battlefield.

(Mikhail was probably calm until he found out that a traitor named Kyle was the commander of the enemy unit... Considering Mikhail's personality, I guess he was unable to let that slide...)

Ryouma understood why Mikhail was impatient.

This is the reason why Ryouma was hesitated to entrust the scouting mission to him.

Even so, Ryouma trusted Mikhail's ability.

Despite knowing that Mikhail was impatient, he should have been someone who knows his own game.

That's why Ryouma found it hard to believe that Mikhail did not order retreat until they were completely annihilated.

Ryouma could understand that a Knight usually can't hold themselves back if a traitor was standing in front of them since Knights hate traitor the most, but still...

“So? How far away is the enemy? And how many soldiers do they have?”

Ryouma pushed back his various thought and asked the question that matters most.

What important right now is when the enemies are going to arrive.

And also how many soldiers they are bringing.

Ryouma, who was already in a disadvantage, had found himself in further disadvantage after the reconnaissance unit got annihilated.

Even with the preparation of trench and fences, they would still get destroyed if they were to receive a surprise attack right now.

“The soldiers' numbers are unknown, but at least... they have more than 5000... as for the time... they should be arriving in 15 minutes from now...”

Ryouma's face turned pale.

“Lione! Bolts! You guys go take the defensive position on the north and south. And take 400 soldiers each! I will handle the center with Laura and 600 troops. Sara! You stand by behind and manage the rest! Also, ask someone to form another reconnaissance unit to confirm the enemy's position!”

After Ryouma stood up, he assigned the defensive position to Lione and her group.

Lione and the others have been familiarised with some defensive positions to a certain degree; thus no confusion ensued.

They nodded immediately and left the tent.

“M-Mikoshiba-sama...”

“What is it? Is there anything more?”

“I-I'm sorry... w-we were unable to... carry out our duties...”

Hearing that, Ryouma nodded toward Laura and the others and made them leave the tent. He then crouched down on his knees beside the wounded Knight.

Right now, time is very valuable.

However, this is about the last words of a knight that has been surviving up until now with his will power alone.

Ryouma had no choice but to listen to his final words.

“It is fine... I understand...”

Ryouma just nodded to the wounded Knight.

This knight was only obeying Mikhail's order.

It is impossible for Ryouma to put all the blame on this knight who's on the verge of death.

Ryouma held the wounded knight in his arm.

Then begin to hear the injured Knight last words.

“M-Mikoshiba-sama... Her Highness... Princess Lupis... please... make her... the queen... of... Rozeria...”

Having finished say his final wish, all the power left the wounded knight's body.

Perhaps there were more things he wanted to say to Ryouma, but before he could say them, his life had come to an end.

Ryouma felt the responsibility rested upon his shoulders.

It was the wounded knight's wish and hope.

“Fool...”

Ryouma, who has just witnessed the knight's final moment, mercilessly uttered a word that can be considered merciless and filled with ridicule.

“Mikoshiba-sama! We have confirmed the enemy's shadow one kilometer from this place, and their numbers are 7000!”

There are 2000 more than the wounded knight had reported.

(Tsk... did the reinforcement joined force?!)

Ryouma desperately try not to click his tongue unintentionally in the public.

Right now, if the commander lacks confidence and shows any fear, those feeling will spread to the other soldiers.

This could cause them to lose instead of winning.

“Understood! Tell Lione-san and Bolts-san to defend their position as instructed! I will command the center!”

Following Ryouma's instruction, the messenger ran toward Lione's position immediately.

Inside Ryouma's head, he remembered the words the wounded soldier.

(Make Princess Lupis queen huh?)

He then shook his head. Right now, he cannot afford to lose focus on what's in front of him.

It is absolutely crucial to have a strong resolve to kill and desire to keep on living when entering the battlefield.

Only those...

(First, my top priority is to survive... everything else comes later!)

Ryouma grabbed his spear and ran toward his position.

For the sake of his future.



“What's going on! How could they build such impressive defensive fortification in such a short amount of time!”

The sun is about to disappear from the sky.

Given the battle will be difficult when night comes, this is the perfect time for them to make an attack.

Usually, it is a good idea to use the momentum after crushing 500 reconnaissance unit to keep on attacking.

However, right now that might not be the case.

Currently, Kyle who saw the enemy's camp in front of him is hesitating to attack.

(What's going on?... At this rate, I won't be able to fulfill his Excellency Gerhardt-sama's order!)

“But still Kyle-sama. We can't just ignore Gerhardt-sama order by not attacking either...”

An adjutant advised Kyle.

Sometimes people get angry when someone else pointed out something obvious.

“I know that already!”

The adjutant lowered his head after hearing Kyle's response.

(Are you stupid! Can't you see there's a defensive formation on top of that strong fortification there!)

In front of them, there was a 20 meters width dry moat.

According to the reconnaissance unit, the dry moat has a crescent shape with length of about one kilometer.

It also has quite a considerable depth.

It will not be easy to break through that defence.

(But still... it has supposedly only been 3-4 had hours since they have arrived here! What kind of magic did they use?!)

It was natural that Kyle was surprised.

In this world, without proper civil engineering equipment, a construction like that usually cannot be done.

Moreover, they usually require people such as farmers to do the work. And lots of them.

(I didn't hear any reports about labour workers get taken from the neighboring villages! Did they bring them from the imperial capital?... No, that is impossible. If they do something like that then their marching speed would be slow... Then how are they able to accomplish such work? They should only have 2000 troops with them. Even if everyone worked, it should still be impossible for them to finish the amount of work in such short amount of time...)

At the edge of the dry moat, some wooden fences are lined up.

It should have taken even more time to make something like that.

It is hard to believe that their enemy was able to make all of the defensive fortification within the time they supposedly arrived around noon up until now.

(Khuu! I should've left Mikhail alone and attacked here instead!)

The face of Mikhail suddenly appears in Kyle's head.

(Curse that bastard! Always getting in my way!)

Kyle could not control his anger.

It was an unjustified resentment based on a misunderstanding, however, he couldn't help but be irritated.

"Kyle-sama... what should we do?"

His adjutant timidly asked him once again.

Kyle lashed out in frustration.

"We have no choice but to charge!"

"Understood!"

Indeed there was no other alternative for Kyle.

Knowing that the opponent numbers are small from the reconnaissance report, he had asked Duke Gerhardt to take command himself.

In order for him to get the permission, Duke Gerhardt had explicitly ordered him to destroy the enemy entirely.

However, at the time the report did not mention anything regarding the defensive fortification.

(Mikhail's reconnaissance unit was around 500. By now, the enemy should have around 1,400-1,500 men left. On the other hand, we have 7,000 with us. With these numbers alone, we are overwhelmingly at an advantage... And I shall prove it, that those quickly made dry moat are useless!)

Kyle gradually calmed down.

No, more precisely, he forced himself to calm down.

Despite the fact that the enemy has made an impressive defensive fortification, he still has a large numerical advantage.

(I will absolutely defeat them!)

There's no turning back for Kyle, who had betrayed Princess Lupis, to withdraw.

Achievements are needed for him to survive within the nobles faction.

But little did he know.

That his current mindset is similar to Mikhail's before he was crushed.

“Kyle-sama! The preparation is ready!”

Listening to his adjutant words, Kyle nodded his head.

Kyle then pulled out the sword on his waist and ordered his troops to move out.

“Chaaaarge!”

In accordance to Kyle's order, all the troops raised their flags.

““““Uoooooh!!!”“““

The 7,000 soldiers charged toward the hill loudly.

They have not realized.

That the trap of death has been laid in front of them.

From here, the battle that would decide Rozeria Kingdom's future had begun.

Chapter 22

Defensive War ③

Day 169 after being summoned to another world.

“Listen up! Don't let your guard down! The enemy is five times our numbers; you die if you lose focus even for a moment!”

Under Lione's order, the Knights began to pull the arrow on their bows.

“Wait on my mark!”

Just like an avalanche, the enemy surged in from the south side where Lione is guarding.

Loud battle cries echoed throughout the battlefield. With the effect of adrenaline, the soldiers charged in fearlessly, thirsting for blood.

It was like a starving pack of wolves attacking without self-control.

Though on a closer look, they are not regular soldiers.

They are the farmers from Duke Gerhardt's territory that was drafted to become soldiers.

Naturally, they have never received any proper military training, not to mention that, they are only equipped with cheap spears and basic leather armor.

They are not wearing any helmet or shield.

That indicated just how worthless their lives are in the eyes of the nobility.

But right now, they are showing a tremendous battle hunger.

After all, the enemy's camp is just like a treasure island with a lot of loot up for grab.

The conscript system in this world is quite an unrewarding one.

Not only they have to put their lives on the line for their lords,

There is little to receive in return.

The reason for that can be attributed to the various kinds of tax that exist.

However, despite all of that, there is still some incentive to serve the lord.

In the form of plundering, there is a rule that allow them to claim any battle loot from their enemies to themselves.

They can get some cash from the enemies they have killed, by selling their spears and armor.

To put it simply, It's 'you find it, you keep it' rule.

That kind behavior leads to a more aggressive war.

Rape the women, burn the homes, and steal their wealth.

Captured men are sold as labor slave, and captured women as sex slave.

By wagering their life, there is an opportunity for them to gain significant profits.

That is why, even though the farmers in this world hate the nobles, they were still willing to go to wars.

All for the sake of crushing weaker people to make their own hard life a little easier.

A Knight's equipment is expensive.

They need a full set of armor, a weapon, and a horse.

It can be said that a knight's pride lies in his weapon.

Of course, it is hard for a farmer to kill a knight.

While there is no fixed way to judge a knight's fighting capability, generally f a knight who is capable of using magic art is three times stronger than a farmer turned soldier.

Knights are just like a monster in the shape of a man.

However, there are more factors involved in war than just individual ability.

While they might lose a one-on-one fight, that might change when there are more people on one side.

Just like how a flock of ants can eat a giant elephant.

“Listen up! Whatever you get your hands on, it's all yours! We will guarantee that in the name of Duke Gerhardt! Now, Advance!”

“““Uoooooh!”“““

In response to the order, the front liners immediately rushed forward.

Right now, in their eyes, Ryouma and the others are a pile of treasure.

They are very confident thanks to the overwhelming difference in number.

They surged forward without hesitation.

Because knowing the fact that they have a much larger army than their enemy made them forget about their fear...

As the farmer-soldiers approached the 5 meter mark from the fence;

“Now! First team, let loose your arrows!”



On Lione's signal, the defensive Knights released a barrage of arrows toward the enemies.

HyuHyuHyuHyu

Following the sounds of the wind, several arrows pierced through the farmer-soldiers' heads.

““Gyaaaaaaaaa!!”“

“Damn it! Watch out for the arrows!”

The voices of a farmer-soldier warning about arrows echoed throughout the battlefield.

The moment an arrow pierced their comrades around them, they began to remember the fear they had forgotten.

This ended up slowing down their assault.

“What are you doing?! Press forward! The enemies are small in numbers! Destroy them in a single push! Don't you want to take all of their treasure?! Their gold!”

The enemy's commander shouted from behind.

Perhaps he has felt that his soldiers' advancing pace has slowed down.

Once again, a simple human desire known as greed entered the soldiers' minds.

Logically speaking, the nobles should have provided their farmer-soldiers with shields to protect them from the arrows, but they chose not to.

For the nobles in this world, the farmers are their shield.

To put it bluntly, they don't even care how many farmers die.

Farmers are the stepping stones for the nobles to place the victory flag on the enemy's base.

“Second team! Release!”

Again, under the direction of Lione, the second wave of arrows rained down on the farmers.

“Khu! What are you frightened of?! Their numbers are only a few! They do not have infinite arrows! We still have the advantage over numbers! Advance! Those who managed to reach the fence first will get a bonus bounty! Proceed!”

The enemy commander's aim was clear.

He planned to finish the war by making use of their numerical advantages.

For him, even if it takes five farmers to kill one knight, he is still going to win.

<TLN: Also known as “Human wave tactic”. This is how the Soviet Union won against German Nazi.>

On one hand, for Ryouma, he has the upper hand as long as the two sides clash from long distance.

On the other hand, the noble's side is seeking a close combat, since they have a large numerical advantage.

Having said that, it was quite a difficult task to avoid a close combat completely.

Although the farmer-soldier army was constantly getting shot by barrages of arrows, they slowly began to close the distance.

They stepped over the dead bodies of their own comrades.

Some even used the body of a fallen as a shield.

Gradually but surely, they kept on moving forward one step at a time while withstanding the rain of arrows that came at them.

“I made it! I'm the first!”

A soldier finally shouted that he has reached the fence.

It was rare for the nobles to provide such bonus.

But for the farmer, such money would help them ease their life from high taxes.

That's why he tried to make it known by shouting first.

To make sure that the nobles know that he's the first one.

However, the price for that was far too great.

It has costed him his life.

“Third team, come forward!”

Hearing Lione's instruction, the bow users stepped back, and the spear knights began to step forward.

“Push them back!”

On Lione's command, the spears pierced through the gaps of the lower fence.

The spears were aimed at head level.

The man who shouted that he was the first to arrive on the fence got himself pierced by a spear through his right eye.

“Gyaaaaaa!”

The man screamed painfully.

“Retract!”

The spears that were stricken out of the fence were pulled back all at once.

“Puush!”

Numerous spears were protruding out once again between the gap, reaping the foolish farmers' lives.

“Noo! Brother! Lloyd!... Damn it! You bastard!”

“Aaargh! My eye!”

“Hiii! I don't want to die! I don't want to die!”

A mix of angry and terrified voices resounded throughout the battlefield.

Some who tried to step forward, and some who wanted to retreat had collided against each other.

This is the result of not knowing a battle formation.

And Lione is not naive enough to miss this opportunity.

The woman who has survived through many battles as a mercenary has a good battle instinct.

“First team and second team! Release the arrows!”

Following her instruction, the spear knights stepped back and the bow users stepped forward.

“Listen up! Shoot them all! Don't hold back!”

Following Lione's aggressive order, the arrows released by the Knights rained down toward the farmer-turned-soldiers.

“Khu! This is not looking good. Messenger! I want you to report to Kyle-sama that the enemy's resistance on the south is too strong; ask for the permission to withdraw! Otherwise, we are going to need some reinforcement!.”

The noble commander who tried to break through via the South side asked Kyle for the permission to retreat and regroup.

No matter how inexperienced Kyle is, he should know that this would be a wasteful action, since they have already committed so much.

“Damn it! We have five times more soldiers than the enemy! Why is it so hard to break through?!”

Klang

He broke the staff in his hand out of frustration.



“Withdraw you say!? Don't say such stupid thing! We have an overwhelming number! Why should we withdraw?!”

Upon hearing the message from the messenger, Kyle's face turned red in anger.

“B-But... the resistance on the southern side is very strong, the commander deemed it impossible to capture it immediately... if he has to continue attacking, he wants more reinforcement.”

No matter how much Kyle yelled at him, the messenger did not back down.

He was trying to be faithful toward his duty.

But because of that, Kyle grew even more irritated.

“Don't joke around!”

Dokang!

“You bastard! I have a duty to present this achievement to Gerhardt-sama, do you know that?!”

Kyle shouted furiously at the messenger and hit his head.

Normally he would not do such a thing.

Because having a calm judgment is usually his forte.

However, right now there's no trace of such virtue on him.

In fact, it was not just from the south side, there was also a messenger from the north side that came asking the same thing.

Additionally, Kyle himself who has been attacking the central side couldn't manage to

break through Ryouma's defense either.

Thus he has not much reinforcement to spare.

On the contrary, Kyle himself wants some reinforcement as well.

“There's no reinforcement! Make do with what you have and break through their defence! In the first place how come we can't break through the enemy's defense when we have five times more force than them?! Tell them not to be lazy instead!”

Kyle's words were nothing more than quibbles. However, the messenger couldn't rebuke him.

If the messenger makes the wrong move here, he could be killed instead.

Right now, Kyle's mind is under sheer madness.

Abusive language kept repeating within Kyle's mind while he was looking at the messenger who was running back in panic.

(Damn incompetent fellow! Always letting me down!)

The dry moat and fences turned out to be quite strong, effectively slowing down their invasion.

Kyle had annihilated 500 soldiers under Mikhail's command. He thought that his enemy's morale would be low because of that, but surprisingly, there's no sight of such thing in front of him.

And now, the advantages of having more soldiers seem to not have made any difference.

(Why! How come they have such strong fortress... why can't we breakthrough?!)

Kyle cannot afford to lose this battle by any means.

Now that he had switched sides from the Princess' to the nobles' faction, he cannot afford to lose.

Rather, he should not have any hard time doing this.

Because he has a lot more soldiers compared to his enemy.

Everyone in the nobles faction will look down on Kyle if he struggles to win.

Even Duke Gerhardt who gave the command to Kyle would end up doubting his ability.

And it would be hard for him to lose the incompetent tag later on.

Failure here would be no different to receiving a death sentence.

(Damn it all! Each and every one of them! Always getting in my way!)

Kyle does not want to admit that currently, he's struggling.

Rather, he blames all the troops under him, that they're not putting in enough effort...

Kyle cannot accept the fact that his ability is inferior to the enemy commander. After all, he once had outsmarted them when they annihilated the reconnaissance unit lead by Mikhail.

"I will go to the battlefield myself!"

The officers beside him went pale after hearing Kyle's declaration.

The fact that Kyle, the commanding general, is heading to the front line means the Knights reserved on the back would have to move to the forefront as well.

The soldiers Kyle is leading now are comprised of 2000 knights and 5000 farmer-recruit.

However, the knights under his command are soldiers that cannot be used meaninglessly.

After all, they are a force that Duke Gerhardt secretly arranged to use against suppressing the knight faction later on.

Although Duke Gerhardt hates General Hodram, he has never looked down on the knight's ability.

A knight unit is composed of humans who are capable of using powerful magic arts...

Because Duke Gerhardt himself is capable of using magic arts, he was able to understand this.

That is why Duke Gerhard has been secretly gathering knights from four chivalric order who should have guard the border and the king.

What's more, he has also been gathering skilled mercenaries, Knights who were exiled from other countries, and Rozeria's knights who had deserted their post.

He incorporated those people and made his own order with a high degree of reward.

And the total force count is 6000.

2000 was lent to Kyle.

Kyle himself know the importance of this Knights.

"Please wait a minute! Isn't this too early for us to move?"

The officers on Kyle's side tried to stop him.

Because originally, they had planned on destroying the enemy in a single stroke after the farmer-soldier had successfully broken through the fences.

"Shut up! It was a naive judgement on my part for expecting the farmers to break through the enemy's line! Though at least, the enemy should be feeling tired as they have been constantly fending off those peasants. Now they should be unable to defend against our Knights' assault!"

Kyle rejected his adjutant's advice to wait a little bit more.

He insisted that if they start assaulting the enemies troops with the knight now, they would be able to win.

This clearly reflected his state of desperation.

The words that his adjutant have heard was like receiving a public execution sentence.

But despite all that, the adjutant also understood his desperation.

That commander's failure is also his adjutant's failure.

And Duke Gerhard is not so kind to forgive such incompetent men.

Only being demoted from the current position can be considered as very lucky.

Depending on how big of a loss they sustained, they might end up with a death sentence.

“I understand! But in that case, we should send a messenger to the north and the south unit and order them to assault the enemy at the same time. If we attack them at the same time, these fences and dry moat won't be much of a problem! “

After the adjutant gave his advice to Kyle, no one said anything else.

“Very well! Fetch me a messenger immediately! We shall finish this before sunset!”

Currently, there is about 30 minutes remaining before sunset.

After sunset, the level of visibility will drop down drastically. Kyle and his army are not prepared to do night battles.

However, if he was able to break through the enemy's defense line, night battles can be done by performing arsons on the enemy's property.

Having finished planning his strategy, Kyle instructed the entire army to perform the assault attack simultaneously.

This battle ultimately marked the beginning of the decisive war between the princess' and noble faction, where neither sides can afford to withdraw.

It is left to be seen which side will emerge victorious.

Chapter 23

Defensive War ④

Day 169 after being summoned to another world.

“Mikoshiba-sama! Please look at the enemy’s movement!”

Ryouma who is currently taking command of the central side received a report from one of his knights.

“Hmm? They don't look like they have any intention to retreat at all... that commander, is he going for all or nothing?”

Ryouma carefully observed the enemy’s manoeuvre.

“It seems like there is a lot of movement in one of the enemy’s headquarter...”

“Indeed, it looks like they are trying to finish the fight by sunset... Although, I don't know why they are in a hurry...”

Ryouma does not know the man named Kyle.

He is not aware of the fact that Kyle has personally asked Duke Gerhardt to allow him to lead the army.

One thing Ryouma could notice was that the soldiers around him are impatient.

(There are three gates located on the north, south and central sides, where each of them provide the easiest access route through the dry moat. That being said, it is never a simple task to occupy those gates without proper preparations... Is he so stupid to not realize that?... It doesn’t seem that way, judging from the first impression. He is probably just underestimating the strength of this fortification. The overwhelming difference in number must be the reason why he is so overconfident... That's why he is trying to force an attack, but still, why does he need to be so hasty??... No matter how worthless the peasants' lives are, I never thought they would pull something as

reckless as this...)

In light of how cheap peasant lives are in this world, if the number of peasants decreases too much, their tax revenue will be heavily affected.

Certainly their life alone might not have much of a significance. However, it is still a bad idea to let them die unnecessarily...

(Why is he so impatient? Is he worried that our reinforcements are about to arrive? No, no matter how I look at it, it was obvious that we would still need more time for the reinforcement to arrive... that means...)

“Oi! Do you know anything about the guy named Kyle!?”

“Yes, sir! I'm quite familiar with the person!”

One of the knights near Ryouma raised his hand.

“What kind of person is he?”

“Let see... selfish, cunning, and a cowardly man?...”

Toward Ryouma's question, the knight described Kyle with absolute disgust.

Naturally, it is understandable. If a knight betrayed the Princess after he had previously sworn his loyalty to her, that fact would not go down well amongst the other knights.

(Somehow, this is too much of a biased response...)

Ryouma is currently unhappy with the situation.

It's good for him if they all hate Kyle.

However, if they keep underestimating Kyle's ability, then it would be hard for them to win.

There is no direct correlation between a popular person and a strong person...

In this case, an unpopular person and a weak person.

Likes and dislikes towards a person simply cannot be used to determine their ability.

Deciding that a person is weak just because you hold a prejudice towards them is no different to the reasoning of an immature child.

Certain attributes that may sound bad on the surface can actually have another good sides to it.

Being a selfish person means they are capable of gaining the best benefit for themselves.

Being a cunning person means they are careful and clever...

And being cowardly person can mean they are cautious and observing...

Sometimes, the evaluation of the same person can differ, depending on who the evaluating person is and how much they like the evaluated person...

(But... what's going on, if that evaluation is as I have predicted, then... it feels like I am facing against a different person... maybe a different person took over the enemy's command?)

Following the knight's description, Ryouma could not imagine that the person who is in command of the enemy is Kyle.

That is, until he heard the following words.

“That guy has a big pride, a big mouth and also an arrogant attitude!”

“Big pride? Big mouth? Can you elaborate what kind of big mouth you are talking about?”

“Yes, sir! It was around four years ago, at the time when the rookie martial arts tournament was being held in the Rozeria Kingdom.....”

.....

.....

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...

To summarize the words of the knight,

After boasting that he could defeat Mikhail who was said to be the favorite in the martial arts competition under 1 minute, it turned out he had lost to Mikhail in the first round when his sword was disarmed from his hand.

It quickly became the hot topic of discussion in many taverns.

“I was also there, so there's no mistake.”

“By the way, how was Kyle's skills? It can't be that bad, can it?”

It was left unclear whether Kyle was someone who could back his words with action.

Since winning in martial arts can be attributed to luck as well.

However, as soon as he lost, there was no chance to prove his ability.

To put it bluntly, even when he lost to Mikhail, if he was the second strongest within the kingdom, then his words are not to be taken lightly.

Hearing Ryouma's question, the Knight's expression distorted.

That indicates even though he does not want to admit it, Kyle is someone who shouldn't be underestimated...

(I see... I guess Kyle is not a completely useless person huh... Aside from his big talks, most knights in Rozeria seemed to have acknowledged Kyle's abilities and his aspiration to become the best despite the fact that he had lost to Mikhail...)

After a brief analysis, Ryouma came up with a plausible theory.

(I see now! Kyle, who was confident of his own ability decided to join Gerhardt. He must've proposed to Gerhardt that if he was given an authority, he will crush the enemy troops immediately or something along those lines... If that is true, then I can see why the enemy is being impatient... and if that is really the case then I can easily counter it...)

Ryouma was able to accurately grasped Kyle's train of thought.

Within the nobles faction, being a traitor must have affected his position...

That is why he wants to achieve something great to convince the lord and strengthen his own footing.

(Kukukuku... If that is what he thinks then, I could use this for another plan...)

Ryouma decided to prepare a new countermeasure after knowing that there won't be any reinforcement for the enemy.

“Messenger! From now on we can expect to be attacked from the north, south and central side simultaneously. Tell Bolts and Lione we will execute the first step of the plan earlier than expected. And tell Sara to move to the north and wait for the signal!”

“Understood!”

The messenger dashed off to where Sara is at...

Ryouma then headed down to Laura who was leading a unit of knights to protect the central gate.



“Listen up! Increase your fire power! As you can see the enemies are approaching here endlessly!”

Laura who was defending the central was also involved a big fierce battle.

The enemy soldiers rushed towards the gate like a swarm of locusts.

“This is bad! Spear Knights come forward!... Thrust!”

A number of militia who manage to survive from the rain of arrows have reached the fence once again.

Laura commanded the spear knights to step forward.

“Laura-sama! There are too many enemies... at this rate...”

A knight near Laura issued a warning.

Because the enemy wave attacks never stopped, it made the knight who was in charge of leading the defense restless.

It was natural for them to lose hope.

“Silence! Why do you think we're going to lose!? Under Ryouma-sama's direction, we have yet to let anyone pass the gate, have we not?!”

Like Laura had said, Ryouma's strategy seems to have worked out for now.

Slowing down the enemy's advancement with moat and fences, as well as filtering the enemy's military forces to attack the three gates, have allowed them to hold their ground effectively despite having fewer troops.

Constant rain of arrows from behind the fence greatly reduced their numbers.

Rather than relying on an individual's abilities, working cooperatively allow them to compliment their strengths efficiently.

With good cooperation between the troops, they were able to mutually reduce the mortality rate dramatically.

Although such strategy was highly unpopular among the knights, Laura on the other hand valued Ryouma's strategy highly.

Laura scolded the pessimistic knight while recalling memories of her father at the time when she was little.

[Laura, listen... a man standing at the top should never show any weakness... even when you are afraid, even if you want to run away... how long a man can stay resolute... that is what determines the quality of a person who stands at the top.]

No matter how good Ryouma's strategy is, if Laura wavered even for a split second, the front line could collapse in a single moment.

At the end of the day, human mental strength is what important in the battlefield.

If she showed any hesitation even for a second, it will spread to the others like a wildfire.

“That is correct! Show no mercy and kill them all! We must hold our ground until the time comes!”

A sudden voice came from the back.

“Ryouma-sama!”

Laura raised a surprised voice.

Ryouma is currently in charge of the central gate. Though in fact, he also has the authority over the whole command.

Therefore he should never go to the front line directly. The orders should be dispatched from the headquarter which is located further inside...

“The enemy's main force has begun to move; they are probably going to make a simultaneous attack soon.”

“So that's how it is... I have felt that the pressure from the enemy has suddenly increased for some reason.”

Laura nodded in acknowledgment.

“With regard to that, I think I should take command in the front line personally.”

Ryouma's line of sight was directed to the front.

Currently, there has been no big problem so far.

“Is it alright to do that?... emm, what about Lione-san and the others?”

“It's fine... I've already given them some instructions. The only thing left is to give Sara the signal.”

“Is it really alright?... to use that now?”

Laura asked anxiously.

The reason being was that the plan Ryouma had prepared was supposed to be used

against the Noble faction's main force, in order to buy enough time for their own reinforcement to arrive. Now that he has decided to use it early, Laura couldn't help but be anxious.

"Well, it can't be helped. I understand that it is earlier than we had planned, but since the enemy is rushing in recklessly... We might as well take advantage of this opportunity and kill them... It would give us a little bit of breathing space for a while... and don't worry, I still have some other plans up my sleeve."

Ryouma finished his sentence with a devilish smile.

His explanation in some way was like an indirect insult to the foolish commander and his unfortunate soldiers, who are about to become victims of Ryouma's devious plan.

Ryouma, who has an inferior number, must emphasize on the two important factors in order to win.

The first is to minimise the damage taken as much as possible.

The second is to ensure that the morale of his troops don't drop.

Now that they have prepared moat and fences, they were able to reduce the damage significantly. First condition is cleared.

However, what about the second one?

He just barely managed to meet it.

To be fair, the truth is that he had no other options to meet the second condition effectively...

The attacking side usually has higher morale in a battlefield.

There is less psychological stress on the attacking side than the defending side.

And crucially, the commander who is currently working under Ryouma, serves Princess Lupis. The fact that Ryouma, who is a complete outsider is the highest seat in the command chain baffles the commander and his soldiers greatly.

They found it hard to trust Ryouma who has unclear background.

It would be hard to raise and maintain morale if the soldiers have any doubt in their commander.

They were following Ryouma's order properly for now. However, if a gate was breached somewhere, there was no guarantee that Ryouma will be able to push the enemy back.

That's why right now, Ryouma wants to show the knights his prowess.

“Listen up! Just a little bit more! We can do this!”

“““Oooooh!!!”“““

The knight responded to the encouragement from their commander.



“What are you doing?! Are we still not getting through yet?!”

Kyle shouted in frustration.

He has already brought the 2.000 elite knights to the front line.

He expected that they would be able to immediately cut through the fences and break into the enemy's line.

However, as it turned out, he was still unable to breach Ryouma's defense line.

Kyle then proceeded forward to the enemy's defense line himself.

He ride his horse deep into the dry moat as he moved towards the fences.

And Ryouma was never going to miss such opportunity.



“Now! Send the signal to Sara!”

Ryouma's instruction was immediately received by the mercenary who was waiting behind him.

Following that, a fire arrow was launched up to the sky.

It was the signal that begins the onslaught.



“Ojou! The signal from Mikoshiba-sama!”

One of the mercenaries who is working under Sara pointed toward the red light that was launched into the southern sky.

“Are we ready? Is the water ready?!”

“Yes ma’am; we can go anytime!”

A U-shaped weir was installed horizontally at the north riverbank of the Thaves river, altering its usual flowing characteristic. Though currently there is a 20 meters-wide earth barrier standing between the river and the moat.

The Thaves river boasts a very powerful water current.

With this weir, they can easily divert enough water to fill up the moat quickly.

“Good! Let’s do it!”

““““Alright!!!”“““

“Make sure you collapse the 20 meters-wide barrier between the river and the dry moat! Don’t make any mistake now!”

Under Sara's order, the mercenaries started chanting at once.

““““O spirits that controls over the earth. Hear our call and transform the land before us!!!”“““

““““Earth magic art, Earth Sink!”“““

The mercenaries placed their hands on the ground simultaneously.

*Bashaaa!!! *

The ferocious water current immediately started flowing into the dry moat, now that there is no more weir obstructing its usual flow...



A few soldiers on the north side noticed the odd sounds.

Then in a split second, series of panic voices took over the battleground.

Perhaps being a hunter previously, some soldiers have sharp eyes and good sense of hearing.

“Oi! Did you hear something?”

A puzzled soldier asked his colleague next to him.

Because hearing the question made him nervous, he immediately replied,

“Fool! What the hell are you talking about! Concentrate, or you're going to die!”

Both of them are people from the same town.

That is the reason why he had opted to respond, albeit in a harsh tone, even though it was dangerous to talk.

It was a bizarre conversation between 2 soldiers, who are barely managing to survive the constant wave of arrows shot at them by a team of knights under Bolt’s command.

Since he was talking under such circumstance, his colleague thought he was crazy.

“No! I can definitely hear it you know!?”

“What are you talking about! This is not the time for this kind of talk!”

The man from the same town responded once again.

The puzzled soldier knew that losing focus on the battle could be a fatal mistake, but he just couldn’t ignore this hunch he had either.

He decided to turn his eyes to the north.

It was there he saw...

A huge wall of water is flooding at him.



“T-The water!”

He screamed in panic.

The scream has alerted the other soldiers about the approaching wall of water.

All the movement in the battle has come to a complete halt.

No one could raise their voice.

All that can be heard is the sound of water colliding with the moat wall.

It was the sound of death, just like the sound of the trumpet the angel plays to mark the end of time.

Chapter 24

Assassin ①

Day 169 after being summoned to another world.

Numerous dead bodies were floating on the surface of the water that filled the moat.

It was already night time, and the surrounding was illuminated by the light from the torches.

“Fuuh~, everything seems to be going well huh...”

Ryouma muttered as he gazed at the floating dead bodies.

His words were spoken in a sad tone.

Since thousands of men have lost their lives as a result of his plan,.

It was normal for Ryouma to feel a little emotional.

In fact, considering that he was only a highschool student until a few months ago, his mental strength is far superior than an average person of his age.

“Yes, and the casualties on our side are minimal.”

Laura responded.

Ryouma had planned on using the Thaves river’s ferocious water current to his advantage since the moment he arrived.

After all, he was at a huge disadvantage, and unless he uses everything at his disposal, he will have no chance of winning the battle.

Water, for the present day human on Earth, especially Japanese people, is not considered a threat...

Except for a minority, most Japanese can swim since swimming lessons are compulsory in their school years.

However, that is the case in Earth.

It is a completely different story for this world.

Unless they are someone with an occupation related to water, such as fishermen and sailors, the majority of the population cannot swim.

Though judging from how people live in this world, it was understandable.

In this world, most people do not have the privilege to live their daily lives without having to work. For example, a farmer would have to do their agricultural work everyday, children included, in order to get by everyday. These activities occupy most of the sunlight hours, leaving people with little spare time to do anything else.

The truth is, there was no real incentive for them to learn how to swim in a land that is mostly covered in forest.

Days gone by and those children become adults.

As they became an adult, work and responsibility are increased proportionally as well...

In fact, within Ryouma's troops, only about 50 people are able to swim.

Ryouma chose to capitalise on that fact without giving it a second thought.

Furthermore, those militia soldiers were wearing only leather armour.

And leather armors are prone to absorbing water, making it extremely heavy.

If they were only equipped with a spear, they could have just let it go. However, with those leather armours, there was no quick way to strip them.

In fact, most people would struggle to strip off regular clothings under water, as they tend to stick to body, let alone the leather armour.

As a results, the peasants who did not have any swimming experience had drowned.

“I see, how many were there?”

“We did not take any prisoner of war as instructed... and because the order was to kill everything in front of us, the casualties on the enemy’s side should exceed 5.000.”

The enemy's total number was 7.000.

And now 5.000 of them are dead.

There were those who died from drowning, and those who died while attempting to retreat from the fence they had reached.

The group that managed to survive had noticed the water and immediately retreated.

Although there were some survivors, this battle was already over.

“The enemy's force that was attacking the north side was completely annihilated, but since it took longer for the water sweep down the central and south sides, some were able to escape... Regardless, we were able to reduce the number of the elite knight force quite significantly. Overall, this can be considered as a very successful result.”

Ryouma nodded to Laura's report.

An elite knight wearing plate armor has a very strong battle power.

However, Kyle's rash judgement had turned the tide of battle upside down.

The ferocious water current had completely swept Kyle's elite knights, devastating their battle force.

The recklessness shown by the enemy certainly played a big part in the plan's success, but Ryouma thought that in warfare, luck could be categorized as a factor as well.

“With this, we should be able to hold them off for several days... Tell the men to get some rest but make sure to assign people to watch duty.”

Laura nodded to Ryouma and left.

“Now then... what am I going to do now...”

Ryouma muttered to himself.

He is a person who values planning and making preparation, but at the same time he can also be flexible.

In fact, being flexible is one of his forte.

The water plan was not supposed to be use this early.

It was a plan that Ryouma had prepared for t the enemy's main army when they arrive.

(Well since this is a defensive war, that result was not necessarily a clear success, since that plan was supposed to be for later. However, we might have been worse off had we not killed the enemy immediately when there was an opportunity to do so.)

On the bright side, however, due to the fact that they were able to defeat the enemy's army that outnumbered them by a large margin, the knights' morale kept rising.

Besides, reducing the enemy's force from 65.000 to 60.000 is significant...

(Well at this rate, it would be easy to execute the next plan, so it's all good I guess?... After this, it depends on how fast the enemy can move... I sure hope not until Princess Lupis arrives here... but well, I guess that is asking for too much, huh? There is no way Duke Gerhardt and General Hodram will let this situation slide...)

Ryouma knew that he needs to ready another plan immediately in case the enemy makes another attack.

All the preparation should be done before the main force lead by Princess Lupis arrives here as well.

(I will need one day to gather all the information regarding the present situation. The second day should be spent on using the gathered information to formulate a plan, and another day to prepare everything in places. I am going to need at least three days... if today is included, then that would be four days. If we can get through the next three days without any trouble, we will have a good chance of winning this battle...)

A smile finally appeared on Ryouma's face.

(The more time I have, the more options available to me. There should be enough time for me to make some preparation even if the enemy tried to rush here.)

Only time will tell whether Ryouma's judgement was right or not.

No one will know the answer until the war is over.

An outcome of a single battle does not decide the victor of the war.



"You bastard... you sure have some guts to appear before me like this... I will praise you for that."

Duke Gerhardt sneered at Kyle coldly.

It was already late in the night.

However, the light from Duke Gerhardt's office located in Irachion city was still on.

Normally Duke Gerhardt would already be asleep.

However, today is different.

Only a handful out of the 7,000 soldiers that headed off triumphantly in the morning managed to scam back to safety in what was almost a total destruction...

And Duke Gerhardt was unable to sleep because of that.

"Yes, sir! I have no excuse."

Kyle lowered his head.

He had no choice but to admit his mistakes.

"The number of casualties from the peasant-recruits were 4,000, and another 1,000 from the elite knights... not only did we lose in battle, our state of economy was heavily affected as well..."

Duke Gerhardt struggled to keep a straight face when he read through the report presented by his aide.

Though occasionally, when some people become angry, they are able to remain calm and collected.

At least, Duke Gerhardt is one of those people.

“Yes, sir! I'm very sorry.”

Kyle lowered his head once again.

“I couldn't care less about those farmers, but did I not make it clear to you how indispensable those knights were? “

Pressure can be felt from his words.

They were all the elite knights that he had been recruiting for past several years.

Not only were they deployed recklessly during the battle, but to think they would march straight into the enemy's plan, it was understandable for Duke Gerhardt to be angry because of that.

Even more so when the one who led them was Kyle, who is supposedly talented in the field of warfare.

As much as he trusts that talent, he couldn't help but be disappointed with the result.

“Yes, sir!... I am deeply ashamed...”

Kyle kept apologising over and over while lowering his head.

Even if he wanted to make any excuse, it would only cement his status as a loser and infuriate Duke Gerhardt even more...

There was simply no room for him to make any excuse.

“And yet here you are, getting out alive and running back with your tails between your legs...”

Duke Gerhardt kept complaining as he read through the report.

“Yes, fortunately, because the horse I was riding was able to swim, I managed to survive...”

“Hou... and here I thought that you had abandoned everyone else just so you could make it back alive.”

The Duke ridiculed Kyle harshly.

Kyle gritted his teeth as he endured Duke Gerhardt's insult.

There was nothing else he could do.

The fact that Kyle managed to get out alive was down to pure luck.

Having decided that he would proceed to the frontline himself, he made his way through the dry moat.

Then, a huge wave of water came crashing down.

At that time, he was surrounded by knights in every direction, blocking all the escape routes.

The water immediately swallowed Kyle, who was wearing plate armor just like the other knights, and he should have died there.

It was because the horse he rode has changed his fate.

Kyle's quick judgement of removing some of the heavy part of the armour also influenced his survival greatly...

Regardless of whether it was down to luck or not,

The horse he rode was able to swim out of the muddy water current.

And Kyle narrowly survived.

“Fine... I will postpone your punishment verdict.”

Hearing Gerhardt's decision, Kyle let out a sigh of relief.

It wouldn't be strange for Duke Gerhardt to hand him a capital punishment.

In fact, it was strange that he did not receive it right away.

After all, the damage Kyle has caused was worthy of one.

“What are you looking relieved for? I never said that I would forgive you? “

Kyle’s body froze up almost immediately.

“Oh well, you are dismissed for today.”

Duke Gerhardt waved his hand signalling Kyle to leave.

“T-Then, please excuse me.”

After lowering his head, Kyle went out from the office quickly.

It was as if he was trying to flee from his mistake.

“Fuuh... Useless!”

After Kyle had left the room, Duke Gerhardt let out his anger.

There was a short insult, but it packed a lot of rage.

“Are you sure? Leaving it like that.”

“Are you suggesting that I should get rid of Kyle now?”

The aide nodded his head.

“Fool! Do you think that this damage can be offset by his life alone?!”

Kyle has long been out of Duke Gerhardt’s plans.

The reason that Kyle is not yet dead is not because Duke Gerhardt wants him to redeem himself...

Rather, the Duke spared Kyle’s life solely because having one more soldier is better than having one less.

That is the only reason he puts the execution on hold.

“The peasant recruits were dispensable... But to think he wasted the elite Knights too... that fool!”

Losing this battle does not mean that the Noble faction has lost the war.

But regardless of how insignificant of a battle it was, a loss is still a loss.

Gerhardt couldn't help but be angry at this, despite understanding the situation.

(The timing is bad... Hodram had just joined us, and I don't want to show him a weakness that he can exploit...)

The result of this battle could be a huge problem for Duke Gerhardt who's currently in the middle of negotiation with General Hodram as to who should lead.

Hodram himself has been a military commander of Rozeria Kingdom for the past ten years.

Gerhardt, on the other hand, has been dealing with mostly internal affairs.

It would be logical to entrust the command to General Hodram.

Even if most of the soldiers belong to the nobles faction.

Gerhardt perfectly understood that.

But then, there is a risk that Hodram might deprive everything from him.

(That guy is a quite an ambitious person after all. He will definitely aim for my neck if I make a bad move. He is that kind of person. At the very least, his ambition is smaller compared to mine, that's why I can entrust the command of the security unit with confidence.)

For Gerhardt, a person of Hodram's calibre is hard to come by.

That's why he accepted Hodram, who had lost his previous standings.

However, after taking in Hodram and seeing the actual person, he realized that Hodram's ambition has not changed from before.

Gerhardt found out that from the beginning, ever since he served Princess Lupis as the Knight faction's leader, Hodram has been hiding his real intention all along.

He could feel the pressure from Holdram, as if being looked at by a hungry wolf preying on its target.

(I should've never listened to Sudou's advice... as expected, it was a mistake to take in Hodram, huh?)

A figure of a man appeared in Gerhardt's mind.

The man who has always been standing next to Princess Ladine. The man who suggested that Gerhardt should take in Holdram as an ally...

In fact, he is the man who introduced Gerhardt to Princess Ladine...

With a mediocre face that can be found anywhere and an average body build and height, there was nothing particularly outstanding about him.

The only features worth mentioning are his black eyes and black hair.

His existence is only known to a small group of people, even among the aristocrats of the noble faction, since he has never left Princess Ladine's side.

(No... like Sudou had mentioned, Hodram is a valuable fighting force... considering the number of knights lost in battle, his value should increase even more... but the big problem is his ambition.....)

Just for the sake of argument, Gerhardt actually has no problem handing Hodram the military power.

Because he understands that it would be very difficult for him to run the entire kingdom by himself.

As long as Gerhardt's interests are not disrupted, he would not mind.

Simple as that.

(But right now, time is not on our side... once Princess Lupis main force arrives, the momentum of the battle would swing to their side immediately...)

A peasant might be weak individually, but in a group, they can pose real threat.

The reason why the other nobles decided to join Gerhardt is because he has a large advantage against Princess Lupis in term of sheer soldiers number.

But would that reason remain valid if Gerhardt was unable to crush a small unit of Princess Lupis' troops that only have 2.000 in numbers?

Chance is, the peasants and the nobles would start to doubt his ability...

Even worse, from the candidacy point of view, Princess Lupis is ahead of Princess Ladine in term of legitimacy. If the Duke's ability were to be doubted, it would only cause his followers to lose faith and turn their back away from him.

Taking all of these into consideration, Kyle's failure this time cannot be described as anything but a disaster.

(This is very much a catastrophe, huh?... But, no! The war is not yet over!)

Gerhardt shook off all the negative thoughts in his head and regained his composure.

(I will deal with Kyle's matter later... Curse that enemy's commander! If I could quickly dispose of that man, will our chance of winning increase?)

Despite Kyle's recent error in judgement, Gerhardt had previously acknowledged Kyle's leadership skills. Thus, he had not anticipated this outcome at all. The bottom line is that the enemy's commander has far exceeded his expectation.

Gerhardt knew that without a smart leader, there was no way their soldiers could execute the flood plan this well. Killing that leader would surely put him back in the driving seat.

(Previously, the report mentioned that the assassination attempt has failed... But if I recall correctly, we still have some assassins among the enemy's mercenary group... A couple of skilled ones too... Is it possible to assassinate the enemy's commander with this, I wonder?)

An evil smile finally appeared on the Duke's face

From the start, assassins are disposable weapons. It is perfectly fine if they die after the assassination attempt.

Moreover, the enemy should let their guard down after winning their first battle.

(If I want to do it, I should do it now huh?)

“Order the spies to kill the enemy's commander! Now!”

“U-Understood!”

His aide immediately rushed out of the office.

“Kukukuku! I'll teach you a lesson!”

Evil laughter resonated within the room.

His ambition and confidence have not wavered.

Chapter 25

Assassin ②

Day 170 after being summoned to another world.

The morning of the second day came since Ryouma built the defense fortification.

“As expected, there was no night attack huh?”

“Yes, it seems like it was impossible for the enemy to reorganize their army in such a short amount of time “

Laura who accompanied Ryouma answered his question.

“I guess it is to be expected, seeing how much damage they have taken in the previous fight?”

“Most likely, they would need around 2-3 days to prepare.”

“Then it would be better for us to immediately begin our next preparations before it’s too late.”

Laura's eyes shined upon hearing Ryouma's words.

“We are keeping up nicely with our schedule. The time the enemy took to recover from the battle is within my expectation. Also, the next plan will require more time to be effective, and I'm not sure if it will be ready by the time Princess Lupis has to face her decisive battle.”

“Are Lione and the others ready?”

Ryouma ask the most important question.

“Yes, they have already selected the necessary personnel and finished preparations

while we're at the Royal Castle.”

“Good, then I would like for all of them to attend the meeting after breakfast. Ugh, by the way, what about breakfast?”

Ryouma stomach begins to rumble.

A human being needs to eat periodically, even if they are in the middle of a battlefield where their lives are at risk.

“We've already prepared it.”

Laura has already prepared Ryouma’s meal beforehand.

From the beginning, there were already a number of cooks in the army. Thus it was not necessary for Laura and her sister to cook for Ryouma

However, they never left Ryouma's personal care to another person.

It became an unwritten law for them to take care of him even when he was in the Royal Palace.

“If that the case then, I guess I want to eat them immediately while they are still warm.”

After saying that, Ryouma returned to his tent.



Then came the second day after the battle against Kyle ended.

“Well, I am ready as always.”

“I also have no problems. We've already prepared in advance and are ready whenever.”

Inside the tent, there are four people excluding Ryouma, and these people are Lione, Bolts, And the Marfisto's sisters.

“Since it would be suspicious if you go around with too many people, how about you choose ten people from the [Red Lion] mercenary group? “

Toward Ryouma's words, Lione and Bolts nodded their head.

“And Sara, about the task you were given, how much progress have you made?”

Sara organised her thoughts in her mind before reporting to Ryouma

“Her name is Sakuya, and we still don't know who she is connected to, but there's no doubt that she has been in touch with someone ever since we've been in Royal castle.”

“I see... well, for now, we can let her be for a while.”



In reality, Ryouma was unsure on how best to deal with Sakuya.

What kind of person is she?

Is she a spy or an assassin?

Which force is she connected to?

There were far too many unknown factors.

Ryouma could easily eliminate her if he chose to but the people she is connected to might just send someone else to attack him.

It would be a lot safer to leave her alone as long as she is under his supervision.

“But still, what is her goal? That is the most important question?”

Lione threw out a question.

That would be natural.

“What are you saying, this is thanks to Lione-san that I am able to use her for something.”

“Me?”

Lione was able to recruit about 90% of the mercenaries without having to go through the guild. Although some did come from the royal capital, their number didn't even reach 10% of their overall manpower.

“I see, that's why you asked Nee-san to hire the mercenaries huh?”

“What do you mean?”

Lione turned her question towards Bolts who seems to understand Ryouma's intentions...

“It was for monitoring purpose, as it would make it easy to do so since we're able to reduce the number of unknown people. This helps to find any suspicious people among the mercenaries.”

In other words, if a person enters an army composed of Lione's acquaintances, then naturally that person would stand out. This in turn would ease the process of finding suspicious members, making it much easier for Ryouma to spot and monitor them until they are compromised.

"I see, you had already assumed that a spy would be slipping into the mercenary unit since the beginning?" Lione spoke in admiration.

"I need to think of every possible scenarios after all."

It is a common tactic to use spies to monitor your enemy's every move. It is normal for any commander to consider and counter this tactic, but due to certain circumstances Ryouma was unable to dispatch one.

That was Ryouma's personal thoughts on the situation.

"I see."

The meeting ended shortly after Lione showed her admiration for Ryouma's ability as a commander.



"Sara, where are those people going?"

After looking at Sakuya who was handling the dead bodies near the fences, Ryouma directed his line of sight toward the people who were crossing the water filled moat with a raft.

The corpses needed to be dealt with as soon as possible to prevent the spreading of epidemics. Though most of the corpses, especially ones with light armour, had already been swept away naturally by the flood.

Using the Thaves river to obliterate an army was indeed effective, but from a sanitary point of view, it left them with a lot of cleaning up work...

Sara was in charge of stripping the equipment of the remaining corpses and tossing

them into the moat to be carried away by the current, along the rest of the bodies.

“Oh, they are merchants from the neighborhood. They’ve just returned from conducting business talk elsewhere.”

Sara replied.

“Merchants, are they?”

“Indeed, hmm? Is there anything suspicious?”

Based on Sara’s reaction, Ryouma decided to not pursue the conversation further.

“No... nothing...”

(What could this possible mean? Merchants? In this battlefield? How’d they even get here; did they cross the moat and hide? No if they did that they would have hidden their return trip too...)

Then he averted his gaze back towards Sakuya who was dealing with another corpse.



Sakuya could not hide her feelings of agitation.

It has been almost a month since the time she entered the mercenary units and so far and she has yet to find out any valuable information.

(Maybe... They are hiding some really important information?!)

It is natural for her to think like that.

In fact, the merchants who had crossed the moat have been entrusted with an important role, but she would only find out about this later on.

Also, It was almost impossible for Sakuya to get the necessary information.

After all, Sara was always watching over her shoulder.

(Why is that person always watching me? Am I compromised?)

Sakuya panicked for a brief moment, but quickly dismissed that thought.

(No, that's impossible. If they already knew who I was they wouldn't have allowed me to live for so long.)

Sakuya had already investigated the person named Mikoshiba Ryouma.

Although, she could not understand why such person with an unknown background was allowed to help Princess Lupis, she was made to understand that he was a ruthless person based on the results of his previous plan which was unfolded before her very eyes.

Pika

For a brief moment, a blinking light could be seen in the corner of her eye.

Pika..... Pika, Pika

There was two consecutive flashes of light, after a while, it blinks for the third time. Her employer has given her the signal to assassinate Mikoshiba Ryouma.

That was the method of communication between the Infiltrator and her employer.

Within the enemy's army, a spy needs to be extremely cautious when they make contact with their allies.

Of course, sometimes they would meet in person.

However, in certain situations, contacting by letters might sometimes prove to be too difficult.

That is why they have prepared in advance to communicate using the light signal.

The advantage of this method is that the enemy will not know the content of the

message.

Besides, most people wouldn't bother themselves with flashing light that happens just for a brief moment.

Sakuya kept working without changing her expression, but in her mind she was plotting how she should assassinate Mikoshiba Ryouma.

(The best option would be to kill him in close quarters, since I'd only need to graze him with my poison-coated blade.)

Last time, they attempted to assassinate him by sniping from afar using a bow, but Ryouma was able to dodge the arrow.

Failing for the second time in a row is not an option.

Although the possibility of her surviving was low once she attempted it, and she would need to be prepared to die.

(Kill or be killed...)

An assassin should always be prepared to die. However, she was unaware of Sara whose gaze was fixed upon her.

The night of the second day was passing. It was a night where the moon hid behind the clouds and the only source of light were the torches around the camp.

Fuu

A shadow silently and swiftly ran through clusters of tents.

However, none of the guards notice it, since it was donning black clothes and a black mask to blend into darkness.

(Is this where he is?)

The shadow stopped once it reached a familiar tent. It was the tent of the enemy

commander. However, even though the darkness would have made a normal person unable to recognise it, an assassin whose eyes had been trained to see in the dark could identify it effortlessly.

Silently unsheathing the sword hanging on its waist, the shadow took out a small vial containing a thick black liquid. The content was smeared onto the sword delicately and after placing the vial back into its bosoms, a piece of cloth was took out and placed at the base of the blade. By applying the right amount of pressure onto the blade, it ensured that the liquid has coated the edge of the blade.

(This should be enough poison, all that's left is to take Mikoshiba Ryouma's life with these hands...)

After the shadow confirmed that the black liquid had been properly applied to the blade, the shadow began to sneak toward the tent entrance.

Ryouma's tent did not have any security guards to defend it.

No one knows if it's because he was confident or because he felt it too bothersome. However, it was clear that he never wanted any guards around his tent...

The shadow might have been worried about traps if this was carried out just a few days ago, but now since the shadow understood that the only reason behind the lack of security is due to the fact that Mikoshiba Ryouma deemed it unnecessary, since he felt he hasn't done much to deserve this kind of special treatment.

The shadow looked inside of the tent from the entrance.

At the place where Ryouma would lay asleep.

The inside of the tent is pitch black; there was no candles illuminating the tent.

A table for holding conferences stood in the middle of the room.

Armors are hung on the sides of the tent, and Ryouma's personal sword was leaning on the edge of the bed.

On top of the bed, a human body was laying there.

However, at such distance, and within such darkness, it was hard for the shadow to

identify the identity of the human.

The shadow crept closer to the bed to confirm whether it was Ryouma or not.

(Now!)

The shadow silently swung its sword.

There was no one in the close proximity.

It was the the best time to kill him.

No assassin would waste a golden opportunity like this.

Fuhiyu

The sword sliced through the air, towards its target.

The shadow could feel a reaction, and was convinced of its achievement.

However, that belief soon begins to crumble.

Clank

A different metallic sound resounded within the tent.

The shadow was stunned. It did not noticed that there was someone right behind.

Doga

A punch struck the shadow's body.

"Guh..."

The shadow desperately suppressed its groan that was about to come out.

But that left it defenseless.

The man successfully hammered his fist into the shadow's right shoulder.

Another precise fist struck the vital point on the shadow's left shoulder, forcing the shadow to drop its sword due to the shock.

(This is bad!)

The shadow finally understood the situation.

However, the two punches inflicted on its body hindered the shadow's movement.

(Not good... My body won't listen to me properly!)

The shadow's arms were numbed from the attacks.

Gradually, the numbness begins to fade, but there's no doubt that the shadow is at a disadvantage.

The shadow immediately gave up on fighting back and looked for an escape.

(The entrance is behind him... But I would need to get past him, and with the current situation, it would be impossible for me to break through... If that is the case, then...)

It is one of the criteria for being a real assassin, to always choose escape rather than fight one on one.

Fortunately, the tent is made of cloth.

Unlike Wood, it would be easy for the shadow to tear a hole with a hand-held knife to escape with.

The shadow immediately turned around and rushed towards the wall of the tent.

Bibibibibi

The shadow leapt towards the tent wall. Utilizing the momentum, the shadow tore through the fabric with ease.

"What do you think you are doing, this late in the night."

Sara shouted just as the shadow had thought it has escaped.

“!!”

Sara could sense the surprise from the shadow despite the fact that it was wearing a mask.

“Is it that surprising?”

The shadow ignored Sara's words and immediately looked around for another escape route.

(Where? Where should I run?)

A professional assassin never give up on an escape. However, with Sara being there, the chances of escape was lowered considerably.

“Your effort is futile!”

When Sara raises her hand, fully armed mercenaries revealed themselves from within the dark.

Lead by Lione and Bolts; there were about 20 mercenaries that surrounded it. The situation looked bleak as the shadow understood that escape was impossible with these numbers.

“First, throw down all your weapon!”

The shadow was hesitant for a moment before reaching out its hand to the pocket.

A tense atmosphere surrounded the mercenaries.

“It's fine... Put it down slowly!”

Sara immediately calmed the tension among the mercenaries.

(I guess there's no point struggling, breaking through here is near impossible...)

After it has evaluated her situation, the shadow pulled out a small bottle from its bosom and threw it to the ground.

(Since I was ordered to lay down my weapons, they will probably not kill me right away. This means an opportunity to escape may present itself later...)

While thinking that, the shadow dropped all its weapon according to Sara's order.

There is still a possibility of getting out alive.

As it assessed its options, the next move could decide its fate.

Chapter 26

Assassin ③

Day 172 after being summoned to another world.

The gleaming moon rose above the clouds, illuminating the entire area.

“First, let's have you take off the mask.”

The cornered shadow slowly removed her mask without putting up a meaningless fight.

Hariri

Gradually, a woman's face was revealed. The black-haired woman, who has been disguising herself among the mercenary, is known as Sakuya.

“Now that's out of the way, shall we have a little chat? “

“A chat? Don't you mean an interrogation?”

Considering the current situation, Sakuya presumed that Ryouma was sugarcoating his words.

The conversation was held in a large tent, where the assassination was attempted. Aside Ryouma and Sakuya, Lione, Bolts and the two Marfisto sisters are present. The rest of the mercenaries have left the tent to guard the outside.

Indeed, it was a strange atmosphere for what Ryouma called a chat.

“That depends on how we interpret it, no? At least, I'm going to call this a chat.”

To some extent, Sakuya felt relieved after hearing his words.

(With how this is going, there might be a chance that they decide to not torture me... Nevertheless, I was prepared for death regardless of whether they interrogate me or not, but it does not look like they intend to kill me just yet...)

Sakuya could feel that Ryouma and co don't have any intention of hurting her at the moment.

However, she has not completely rejected the other possibility either.

But at the very least, she could calm down after confirming that there was no need to look out for sudden attacks.

"So? What is that that you want to talk about, with someone who had just attempted to assassinate you?"

"You do not have to be that tense, you know?"

Ryouma answered her with a slight smile.

With the current atmosphere being so heavy, Ryouma told Sakuya to loosen up, in effort to ease the tension in between them. While Sakuya did somewhat become more relaxed, the atmosphere still remained rather heavy.

Although her face showed that she has become more relaxed, there is little chance that she would start to open up to him

(Now then... How should I proceed from here?)

From the start, Ryouma never had any expectation of obtaining useful information from interrogating Sakuya.

That is because there was no way for him to verify whether her answers are truths or lies.

There was simply no need for him to take the risk of being deceived later on.

However, if he let her go just like that, then he would have gained nothing from Sakuya.

"There's nothing that I want to hear particularly. Besides, you wouldn't talk even if I ask anyway, and I have no means of proving the authenticity of your words either."

Sakuya's was amazed at Ryouma's words.

If she were to take Ryouma's words literally, that means there's no reason for him to spare her life.

(This man, just what is he planning?)

Sakuya couldn't help but feel anxious. Questions began to pop up one after another inside her head.

Anyone would feel uneasy when they couldn't grasp the train of thoughts of their enemy.

"Then why are you keeping me alive?"

Sakuya was determined to find out what Ryouma is after.

Suddenly, a flash of thought crossed her mind. Since she is a woman, there is another possibility of why Ryouma had spared her.

(Don't tell me, is he after my body?!)

It was natural for her to think that way.

After all, she is quite a beauty.

Long and glossy black hair.

A healthy light-brown toned skin.

Despite going through a harsh assassin's training regime, her chest has developed to quite a substantial size.

Simply put, she boasts such an attractive body, most men would fall head over heels for her.

Although she has been doing all sorts of infiltration and assassination work, at the end of the day, she is still a woman.

She still holds the fear of being forcefully violated by men.

As a woman, for Sakuya, death after failure is much more preferable than being defiled against her will.

But as a human, the fear of getting hurt is just as scary.

Even more so when you do not know the man in front of you.

(But wait... that can't be... If that really was his intention, then he wouldn't have brought the other women here.)

Her assumption was quickly rubbished as she looked at Lione and the sisters.

However, with this, she has gone back to square one. She has learnt nothing of the man called Mikoshiba Ryouma. Not his goals nor his intentions.

“Well, let's just say it's a personal reason.”

Ryouma replied as he observes her behavior.

“Personal reason?”

Sakuya made a complicated face.

“This...”

Ryouma pushed out the sword Sakuya previously had in front of her.

“What about it?”

Sakuya was unable to understand what Ryouma was concerned about.

The sword length is two shaku three sun(2尺3寸).

This is equivalent to approximately 70 cm in length.

Certainly, this is not a sword commonly used in the western continent.

However, the sword itself was not the reason why Ryouma had spared Sakuya's life.

“Why did you use this?”

Sakuya became confused at Ryouma's question.

For an assassin, a sword is just a weapon.

A tool for killing people.

Nothing more than that.

Seeing Sakuya's puzzled face, Ryouma changed his question.

“You, are you Japanese?”

However, the anticipated change in Sakuya's expression that Ryouma expected did not happen.

Her response was like it was the first time she heard the word Japanese.

“What do you mean?”

Sakuya's answer proved that Ryouma's theory was wrong.

(What's going on? An assassin with this type of sword, has black eyes and black hair; and although her skin is tanned, without a doubt she's ethnically Asian... yet when I asked if she's a Japanese, she didn't show any reaction... Is this coincidental? No, that's impossible.....)

Questions kept popping up one after the other.

Ryouma has not looked closely at Sakuya's face up close until now since he left all the supervising duty to Sara.

Two days ago, he only able to see that she's a woman with black hair from a distance.

It was from Sara's report the other day that he found out her name is Sakuya.

Ryouma did not realize it yet back then, but he heard such a nostalgic name.

Sakuya.

In Kanji, that would be Sakuya (咲夜) or Sakuya (咲耶).

Without a context, if these Kanjis were read on their own, most people would think that it is a Japanese name.

It is definitely not a common western name.

(She might be a Japanese just like me!)

It was logical for Ryouma to think that way.

It has been six months since he was summoned to this world.

It would be nice to be reunited with someone from the same country.

However, the fact that Ryouma does not hold any friendly feelings towards the man called Saitou from the Ortomea Empire has not changed.

His only memory of Saitou was when he was taken under custody, which he was not fond of.

Not to mention Ryouma's hatred toward the empire for trying to take his life, it was natural that his impression of them was not good.

In a similar context, an assassin who aimed Ryouma's life is similar in nature, but since her reason to kill and the question about her accomplice are not clear, as a sane human being, Ryouma couldn't just simply kill her just because she was a threat.

There's also the possibility that she was another summoned person who is forced into an assassination job.

Besides, Sakuya is a woman. A beauty too at that...

It was natural for Ryouma to want to offer help to a fellow someone who has the same fate of being forced summon as him.

Mikoshiba Ryouma might be a cold-hearted person, but he's still a human at heart. He can be kind and compassionate at times.

It might sound contradictory, but that is just how a human being is.

Just like a manager who is known for being strict at work, yet is a loving member of his family at home.

In this regard, Ryouma is very much your average human being.

His principle is simple.

He wants to survive.

All for the sake of survival.

In order to achieve that, he is prepared to cut down anyone who stands before his path.

However, what if there is another life that can be saved without compromising his safety?

It would be a logical to help a those in needs, especially when they are one of the same kind.

However, at times there would be cases where there the problem at hand is far beyond his power.

He would at least hear them out first, before deciding whether to help or not.

This much is common sense.

The idea behind capturing Sakuya rather than killing her right away is very much the same.

Ryouma does not intend to kill an assassin right away without hearing her reasons. Without finding out the true motive behind her move, Ryouma wouldn't know whether she was forced to do this work or she was doing it of her free will.

The only thing that was not part of his expectation was the zero reaction Sakuya made when he said the word "Japanese".

"Are you really not a Japanese?"

"I don't know what you are talking about. From what country is that? It's certainly not a country within the western continent right?"

Sakuya gave a clear response.

“Then why are you using a Japanese sword?”

Not convinced, Ryouma asked another question.

He thought of another possible scenario.

It could be that she was introduced to a blacksmith from the eastern continent.

He had heard that the eastern continent use katana.

(Perhaps she is someone from the eastern continent?)

It was a plausible theory.

But Sakuya words overturned Ryouma's assumption once again.

“A Japanese sword? I don’t know about that, but this is indeed the sword we use within our clan.”

“Does every member of all your household use this?”

While Ryouma felt that her responses were sincere, he was still not convinced entirely.

“That's right. Our family uses this type of sword, since a long time ago.”

“Since your family uses this kind of sword, are you from the eastern continent?”

“The eastern continent? We have never left the western continent.”



Using all the obtained information, Ryouma tried to put the pieces together.

A woman named Sakuya, who has the appearance of a Japanese person and uses a Japanese sword.

However, she had no reaction to the words Japanese or Japanese sword.

Anyone from Japan should recognise these words right away.

Piecing these information together, then Sakuya might not be a person who was forced summoned to this world.

This would suggest that she originated from the eastern continent?

It is unknown whether the people from the eastern continent have similar appearance and physical characteristics to a typical Japanese.

If so, then “Sakuya” might be a common within the eastern continent.

And according to the blacksmith at the imperial capital, a katana is a weapon of choice for the eastern continent people.

If that is the case then, it would explain why she uses a katana as her weapon.

(Although I have no concrete proof, it certainly is a possible theory.)

However, there is one thing that ruled this out.

It is the fact that her entire clan uses the sword.

If she's someone from the eastern continent, then she wouldn't have said that it was a “sword that we use within our clan”.

This implies that it is a unique weapon exclusive to her clan, rather than a common weapon.

(A family... A clan, huh...)

While there is no way to prove Sakuya's words Ryouma did not have any doubt.

From his perspective, he believes that there's no point in telling lies about something totally unrelated to her work.

Considering her life as an assassin, it would be unusual if she were to confess anything related to her work.

However, even if she did disclose intels regarding her work, then it would be logical for Ryouma to assume that 90% were lies.

On the contrary, Ryouma's questions were mostly unrelated about her work.

Of course, she could have kept silent if she didn't want to reveal anything to the enemy.

Nevertheless, she has no reason to lie.

Because of that, Ryouma was able to trust her words.

“Well, that means your clan uses katanas, right?”

Ryouma changed his question.

“That's right.”

“And you're really not from the eastern continent right?”

Sakuya shook her head promptly.

The inside of the tent was quiet.

The Marfisto sisters did not intend to disturb Ryouma from the start, while Lione and Bolts also kept silent.

There's something they want to ask, but they choose to stay quiet and watch how the talk unfolded.

“Nee-san... What is the young master trying to find out?”

Bolts whispered to Lione who is sitting next to him.

“Who knows... His questions are certainly unrelated to her accomplices...”

“So we are on the same page...”

“It is something personal... probably.”

From everyone else’s point of views, this was the only explanation after seeing Ryouma’s interaction with Sakuya.

“Well, we should keep silent for now.”

Toward Lione's words, Bolts nodded his head in agreement.

“A clan huh... how many people?”

Ryouma broke the long silence with another question.

(What does he want? why would he be interested in my clan?)

Sakuya struggled to predict Ryouma’s true objectives for asking her these questions.

No matter how hard she thinks about it, she just could not figure out what he is trying to achieve.

“About 200 people...”

Sakuya finally gave her answer.

“200 people?!”

Ryouma choked his words.

200 people.

That number may seem small, but that is far from the truth.

Just imagine a wedding ceremony.

For a typical Japanese couple, including close friends and relatives of both the groom and the bride, 100 people are already a lot.

It is natural for Ryouma to be surprised.

“200 people... do you live in a village somewhere?”

Speaking of 200 people, this volume is comparable to that of a small village.

However, Sakuya's answer denied that speculation.

“No.”

“Then, do you live in a nearby town? Or perhaps all of you live separately in different places?”

Once again, Sakuya shook her head and gave Ryouma the same response.

“No...”

Ryouma is at a total loss.

If they are neither living in a single place nor separately,

Then how are they living?

“Are your clan wanderers?”

Sakuya finally nodded her head to confirm his hypothesis.

Before she had the chance to explain anything else, a voice of an unknown man suddenly interrupted their conversation.

“We have no choice. That is the fate of our whole clan...”

Chapter 27

Assassin ④

Day 171 after being summoned to another world

When such hoarse voice reverberated inside the tent, an old man standing at the entrance of the tent.

(Did he just come down from above the tent? Well indeed it is possible to climb the tent looking at how strong the pillars supporting the tent are, but looking how easy he infiltrate, this is worrying.)*

“Ryouma-sama...”

Sara and Laura was immediately prepared for a fight while calling Ryouma's name in a low voice.

“It's fine. Standby.”

Ryouma ordered with a small voice and nodded toward Lione and the others to ask them to wait and see.

(Now then, a clan of assassins huh?... What are you going to show me this time...)

This is different from a surprise attack, Ryouma didn't feel much different with one or two more assassins shows up this late.

Ryouma who felt he had plenty of leeway turns an inquisitive gaze towards the intruder.

Sakuya's gaze shifted towards the old man.

It seems like an unexpected person has appeared based on Sakuya's surprised expression.

“Ojiji-sama... Why are you here?” Sakuya’s voice was filled with confusion.

White mustache and white hair.

Just like Sakuya, the old man also donned similar black attire and even a complete newbie could understand that he has been through a lot based on the scars and wounds on his face.

And in his left hand he held a cane that was slightly bent to draw an arc.

“Hou... Don't you feel surprised with my visit? I find this to be quite hard to understand, whether you're some sort of a big shot or a fool who is unable to comprehend the current situation...”

Disregarding Sakuya's question the old man’s eyes quickly scanned his surroundings.

“No, I feel surprised enough you know? After all, an uninvited guest has appeared.”

Ryouma replied to the old man with the signature zero Yen Japanese smile, the old men looked around, noting that no one in the tent seemed surprised at his sudden visit.

(Hou, that young man, he seems to be dominating this room huh.)

The old man was impressed with Ryouma’s reaction or lack thereof. If the one who leads were to be surprised or tensed in a situation then the ones who are under him would also follow suit. This showed that Ryouma understood that he was in complete control of his subordinates and the surrounding atmosphere.

“Fuuh! Well, whatever... What I want to know is, why didn't you kill her? Why have you allowed the assassin who was aiming for your life to continue to live?? And furthermore, why aren't you attempting to capture me while I'm standing here?”

“Oh? I thought you came here because you had already understood why?”

Ryouma answers the old man with a broad grin.

If it's only to help Sakuya to escape, then the old man wouldn't have revealed himself to Ryouma.

The fact that the old man revealed himself means he bore no hostility towards Ryouma.

"I see, you can make such judgment huh? You're much more calmer than I had thought, young man... well now let's hear it once again... Are you people of Hinomoto?"

The old man directed a question towards Ryouma.

Ryouma understood that telling a lie at this point would not have been forgiven as he noticed the intimidation flaring from the old man's eyes.

Hinomoto was how the people of the olden generations referred to Japan.

In other words, what he was referring to was Japanese people.

The name has lost its value in modern Japan and is most common in medieval themed novels.

"That is correct. I'm indeed from the country you call Hinomoto."

While answering the old man, Ryouma was also able to derive some answer of his own based on the old man's words.

(Hinomoto huh?... That kind of olden way of speaking... I guess as I've suspected huh?)

"Hou... I've heard that the recent people who come from Hinomoto have foolishly forgotten the ways of a warrior yet there still exist warriors such as you.".

Saying so, the old man turned toward Sakuya.

"Sakuya, stand up and take off your clothes."

"Eh? H-Here?"

Sakuya's complexion changes after hearing the old man's words.

Aside from being an assassin, she was still a woman after all.

Although she stood up, it was easy to notice that she was hesitant to take off her clothes...

Well, unless you're a human with unusual tastes, no one would feel comfortable stripping around so many watchful eyes.

“Too slow!”

Kacha

Together with the old man voice, silver light suddenly radiated from the cane, and immediately disappear as if being sucked by the cane again.

Ryouma's eyes who saw that turn sharp.

Ryouma's eyes caught the old man right-hand pluck out the blade hidden in his cane, and in a single moment slashing Sakuya's kimono from the bottom up.

“Hou... Iai huh? That's quite a good ability you have... To only cut the clothes without harming the skin.”

While Ryouma said those words, Sakuya's clothes began to slowly crumbles into pieces.

Hearing Ryouma's words, the old man smiled at Ryouma who was gazing at Sakuya's body. The old man then placed his hand on Sakuya's shoulder and began to examine it.

“Hou, as I've expected... you've delivered blows to her vital point. Moreover, looking at the hit points, this is no mere punch... this is a penetrating blow is it not?”

To answer the old man, Ryouma only pushes out his fist.

“Hou, a fist where you push out your index finger joint out huh? Indeed such fist is effective for aiming vital point.”

The old man said those words based on how Ryouma push out his fist.

“That is correct. It's called one point fist.”

While nodding at Ryouma's words, the old man touches Sakuya's abdomen.

“Ow!”

Sakuya's face distorted in pain.

“I see... This is the effect of the fist huh? You change the grip of your fist depending on your aim, is it not? This is very similar to the technique that is handed down in our clan, and this technique's aim is to interfere with the victim's breathing am I right?”

“Indeed.”

Ryouma nodded toward the old man's question.

“With that technique, you should have been able to kill Sakuya at anytime, no? You sure have quite considerable skill...”

The old man sighs deeply after saying those words, nobody was sure if the old man was lamenting Sakuya's lack of ability or if he was impressed with Ryouma's overwhelming skills.

Attacking the vital point.

It was easier said than done, especially in real battle where one has to consider the many factors in a short amount of time.

Unlike vital point that leads to serious injuries, a strike to the shoulder or diaphragm requires precise power and also pinpoint accuracy to have an effect.

It's not something that is easy to apply.

And yet, to perform such thing on Sakuya who's an assassin, not to mention in the dark to boot, that truly shows how skillful the human named Mikoshiba Ryouma is.

“It was a surprise attack after all. The result might not have been the same if we were to have battled head on.”

“Are you stupid... Do you think there's an assassin that attacks from the front?” *

Hearing the old man's words, Ryouma showed a thin smile.

After all the old man words were nothing more than an argument.

“Well that is true... oh right, it would be pitiful to leave Sakuya-san like this, please use this.”

Ryouma picked up a nearby blanket and handed it to Sakuya.

“T-Thank you.”

“No no, it is indeed a sight to behold.”



Hearing Ryouma's words, Sakuya immediately hid her chest behind her arms.

She had finally realized that her chest had been laid bare throughout the conversation.

“Fuh... You, you seem to know how to handle women?”

“It's not about knowing about it or not. Well, you can say that this is just my courtesy.”

While answering the old man, Ryouma shrugged his shoulders

Ryouma is quite fond of women, but, it is no hobby of his to watch naked women in torn up clothes.

It would be different if it were only the two of them in private room but right now they were surrounded by people.

Well, he does not know if such thought in this world is normal or not; however, Ryouma have no plan of deviating from his common-sense except in life threatening emergency.

“Well then, if possible, I would like to ask you a few questions”

Ryouma turned the tables on the old man as he couldn't have allowed the old man to be the only one questioning.

After all, the old man's identity was still a mystery to him.

“I don't mind... But I think you've already got all the answer no? What else are you going to ask this old man?”

The old man responded as such.

“Well, sometimes our expectations and reality can be entirely different, you know?”

Upon hearing Ryouma's words, the old man enters a deep thought.

“I see... You sure are a cautious one, well since you're leading an army it must be natural huh? Very well, I will answer your questions.”

“First let me confirm something, did your clan descend from a previous clan that was summoned a long time ago.*?”

“Well let see, it is said that the first generation of the clan were the people who were summoned from another world around 500 years ago”

The old man readily responds to Ryouma's question.

“500 years ago huh? Wait, 'people'? Not just one person?”

There was an unexpected word mixed in the old man's answer...

“That is correct; our ancestors were summoned along with their entire village.”

“The entire village you say?”

The old man nods toward Ryouma's words.

“That's right, well, back then it was only a small village with a population of 20 people.”

According to the old man story, their ancestors were summoned while they were still asleep in their futons.

Well since the flow of time between this world and the other is different. It would be possible that the summoned people were sleeping in the middle of the night.

“But still, is it even possible to summon an entire village?”

As far as Ryouma knew, he never heard of such a strange phenomenon especially in a modern age where information around the world flies freely, news of a village disappearing overnight was never mentioned. <TLN: He's talking about his original world>

“No, well that is a story of the past. Now the catalysts needed for summoning are scarce and expensive, even among the great powers. They are barely able to summon several people in a year.

(That means, I was quite unlucky huh?)

A nation can only summon several people in a year.

Although he doesn't know how many nations exist in this world, even if all of them perform summoning, it would only average about 200-300 people in a year.

With billions of people in that world, he was still one of the chosen 200 or so people to be summoned, Ryouma couldn't help but curse his bad luck.

"I see, then why is your clan still a clan of assassins?"

500 years had passed since then but the clan has still maintained their assassin ways even after such a long time. What exactly was their purpose as a clan of assassins and what of their goals? This was something Ryouma wanted to confirm as soon as possible.

"Our clan is a clan of spies."

Listening to the old man's words, everyone except Ryouma and Sakuya drew a blank expression...

A spy is an occupation that was well known for their abilities, some even refer to them as grass due to their ability to carry out missions without so much as a peep from their targets. Throughout the years they garnered many names but there was a specific name that came to Ryouma's mind, 'Ninja'. <TLN: Grass is another term of "spy" in Japan, it might be different each nation.>

Sakuya's clan is a clan of Ninjas.

(I see... I now can understand as to why their clan remained as such despite the fact that their ancestors were summoned over 500 years ago.)

Certainly, if the summoner had summoned Ninjas to this world where wars are rampant, they would definitely want to utilize the ninja's abilities.

As a result, the Ninjas survived for over 500 years and in that time began to hone and refine their combat skills.

And being in a clan of spies, that means Sakuya not only specializes in assassination but also information disturbance, sabotaging and bodyguard duty.

"I see... By the way, which Ninja school's arts did your clan inherit?" <TLN: Referring to Martial art school>

"Who knows, a spy is a spy. We infiltrate, we steal and we kill, that is all."

They didn't need something like a school name, it might have been necessary if they wanted to spread their influence and be distinguishable from others in the same field but since their arts were only passed down within their clan's descendants the thought of having a name would be unnecessary.

"By the way, do you know the name of the place in which your ancestors came from?"

"I don't know the name of the place but, I do know that they had lived on a mountain near a big lake."

The old man answered Ryouma's question honestly since it wasn't information that had much value.

(A lake... Is it Lake Biwa? That means they came from Iga or Kouga clan huh?)

Those are the names of famous Ninja clans though there are still a number of other possibilities.

"I see, then lastly, you said earlier that "It is the fate of our clan" what does that mean?"

It was Ryouma's final question.

And the answer was beyond Ryouma's expectations.

Japanese ninja usually live in a specific area and either search for employment elsewhere or swear loyalty and server a specific lord.

And in a world where many people strive for power more than anything else, many would want to employ their services, it was hard to imagine that throughout all this time that they've been wondering about.

It is a situation that was difficult to fathom unless there's a special reason.

“Fumu, about that, that is something that cannot be said to an outsider... It is the rule of our clan.”

The old man shows a distorted expression.

“Is that so, then please forgive me for being rude.”

Ryouma lowered his head when he heard the old man answer.

“Hou, are you not curious about it?” The old man was caught off guard with Ryouma’s lack of interest.

“I do not have any hobby of exploring other's secret. Besides there’s a famous saying ‘Curiosity killed the cat’ “

As a human being, it was natural to be curious about other people’s secrets and the more people try to hide it the more it picks one’s curiosity.

There are many reasons why one would try to hide their secrets because of that for some revealing their secrets could be life changing.

(Knowing things without the capability to bear it will only introduce more dangers to myself.)

There's no need to take an extra risk in this world where the value of life is very cheap.

That is what Ryouma had thought.

“You sure have a great self-control... Alright, I've decided! My name is Igasaki Genou. Please take care of us from now on.” The man suddenly announced.

“From now on?” Ryouma was puzzled at Genou’s statement since it was sudden even for Ryouma who was considering the outcomes of the situation.

“What are you surprised about? Since you had spared Sakuya's life, that means you were planning to make her your comrade right? Then you gotta make this grandfather of hers your comrade as well!”

Genou shows a face as if saying 'isn't that obvious?'. The atmosphere around the old man changed from being serious to a more cheerful tone.

“Ojiji-sama?”

Sakuya asked the old man timidly.

“What is it Sakuya? Dissatisfied? By right, since you failed to fulfill your duty you should have died by now but your life has been spared by Mikoshiba-dono, you know? As a punishment and a sign of gratitude why not serve this person?”

Genou had referred to Ryouma as Mikoshiba-dono, this meant that the old man's image of Ryouma rose from a young man to a man worthy of his respect.

“Eh?!... No... Y-Yes...”

Sensing Genou's firm decision, Sakuya nodded her head.

“You don't mind, right? Mikoshiba-dono.”

Ryouma was in deep thought after hearing Genou's question.

Certainly, as a fellow Japanese, it is nice to get help and with Sakuya's abilities as a ninja, Ryouma felt he could utilize it well but for some reason Ryouma felt the story had taken a weird turn ever since the person named Genou arrived.

(What the heck just happened?)

For Ryouma, he knew that this is an opportunity to increase his number of close subordinates, besides Laura and Sara, all his relationships so far have been that of acquaintances.

The mercenaries under Lione and Bolts might be trustworthy now, but no one knows when they are going to betray him and the Knights under Ryouma's command follow him because they were ordered to by the Princess who acknowledges him.

If the Princess choose to give up on Ryouma, then the knights would either abandon or turn on him.

That's why, for Ryouma, it was a godsend if they wanted to become Ryouma's comrade.

However...

(The situation progressing too quick... you are the people that had aimed my life, you know? But still, their abilities are indeed useful. It is not a bad thing for them becomes my comrade. The problem lay in their objectives... If they are serious then...)

Ryouma gazes turns to Genou and invisible sparks scattered between them.

“Very well.”

Ryouma finally came to a conclusion.

He wants to add another useful card to his hand.

(I want people who are capable of conducting intelligence gathering... the problem is whether or not they would be able to find any useful information... Well, that will ultimately depend on my own judgment.)

“Well then, together with my granddaughter, we will serve you. Milord” Genou lowers his head towards Ryouma and at the same time encourages Sakuya to do the same.

Chapter 28

Assassin ⑤

Day 171 after being summoned to another world.

“Ojiji-sama! Why did you do that?”

「お爺様！
何故あのような事を！」

咲夜は抑えていた苛立ちを
嚴翁へとぶつける。

RECORD OF WORTENIA WAR
ウォルテニア
戦記

Sakuya lashed out at Genou out of frustration.

Currently, the two of them are alone in the forest across the moat.

Only the moon floating in the night sky was witnessing their conversations.

“What are you mad about?”

Genou casually returned Sakuya’s question with a question of his own. However, his laid-back attitude caused Sakuya to grow even more irritated.

“Are you seriously thinking about serving that man?!”

“Oho, do you have any complaint?”

Genou brushed aside her concern as if it was nothing important.

“There are a lot of things that I'm dissatisfied with! Firstly, how could you abandon the request on a whim like that? Even worse, you proposed that we served the man who was our target up until just then?! Secondly, why did Ojii-sama appeared in that place?! This is my mission!”

Sakuya was outraged as she let out a series of complaint towards her grandfather.

Currently, she's 18 years old, and she holds the reputation as a prodigy of the clan.

While failing to kill her target and getting caught as a result is quite humiliating enough, the appearance of her grandfather, who is an elder of the clan, just adds further insult to the injury.

With Genou being present as a witness, Sakuya's ability would become a subject of doubt to the other elders.

Her pride was hurt greatly, since the appearance of her grandfather did only solidified the fact that her ability was lacking.

Moreover, her grandfather decided that she and himself would be serving Mikoshiba Ryouma from this point onwards, without seeking permissions from the other elders.

It was totally understandable why Sakuya ended up frustrated.

However, in their clan, age and blood relation is not a factor that determines their ranking. While Sakuya and Genou are blood related, there is a huge difference in their social status.

One day she might follow her grandfather's footsteps and become one of the elders in her clan, but right now, she's only a low-ranked Ninja(Genin).

Forgetting her standing, that low-ranked is naively talking back to an elder.

(This brat... She still has a lot to learn, huh? To lose her calm over something like this... Well, whatever. I shall overlook it this time...)

Genou sighed as he turned his cold gaze towards Sakuya, who has yet to calm down.

Normally, Genou wouldn't have let Sakuya off the hook easily. He is not the sort of man who spoils his grandchildren.

However, right now he is in great mood.

"Brat, who do you think you are talking to?"

The air turned heavy in an instant.

Genou's bloodlusted gaze pierced deep into Sakuya.

Gata

Sakuya felt a chill down her spine, causing her legs to give out and dropped down onto her knees.

(I-I'll get killed.....! W-What am I doing?!...)

Realizing that she has been overstepping her boundary, Sakuya came to her senses.

They are called the elders not because they are old.

Indeed they usually do not take assassination requests.

But that is not because they are weak.

They have engaged most of their lives doing dirty work.

It is a remarkable feat to survive through this type of work until the age of 60.

The difference in ability and experience between a veteran and a newcomer like Sakuya is earth and sky apart.

“I-I'm very sorry...”

Sakuya tried her best to squeeze out an apology.

A gaze filled with bloodlust pulled Sakuya back to reality.

“Good...”

Genou averted his gaze away from his granddaughter who fell on her knees.

“Well, it's not like I don't understand your concern. However, it would be very regrettable to kill that man.”

“Are you suggesting that he could be useful to us? But what about the contract?”

Sakuya asked cautiously.

A contract is a very serious for an assassin.

Failing to fulfill a contract damages their reputation and will turn any potential clients away from hiring them in the future,

Let alone doing something very bizarre as serving the assassination target without permission.

This simple problem could turn into a matter of life or death for the entire clan.

But Gendou laughed off Sakuya's protest.

“You fool. There's no meaning to such contract! Nevermind the humiliation from mission failure, you should have been dead back there! Plus, do you really think that noble, Gerhardt, would pay the price as we had promised?”

Sakuya was left speechless upon hearing what Genou said.

In general, a contract begins once the employer and the employee agree on the conditions. Once the employee completes the tasks required in the contract, the employer would reward him as agreed.

However, it isn't uncommon for people to not honour their contract. They would dispatch soldiers to kill off the contractor once they finished their work.

Sakuya herself was betrayed many times her clients in the past.

Especially this time, when her client is no one else but Duke Gerhardt, who is known as a stingy man, the possibility of betrayal cannot be ruled out.

Although the amount of money he offered is a lot, it is another matter whether he plans to to pay or not.

"Then... Wouldn't all our potential clients turn lose their trust and stop coming to us?"

"I don't mind; I have no problem with losing jobs from this country. We're wandering people after all. We can just work in another country. As far as I know, there are many places where people would love to have my service anyway. Leaving that aside, I'm really pleased to have met that young man... probably he's..."

Genou stopped his words.

(...I guess, I can't tell Sakuya yet... Besides I have to discuss this matter with the other elders first... till that man, I will be disappointed if he's just a good-natured man. But if not, then my wandering life might be over soon...)

Genou went into deep thought, as he remembers all the things that happened today.

When Sakuya was caught, Genou was prepared to sacrifice his own life to save her.

Sakuya, who's regarded as the brightest prospect within the clan has failed on her assassination once.

Behind every mission assignment, an elder would secretly spy on their young prospect to assess their abilities and lend a hand when things go wrong. This time, it is Genou, Sakuya's grandfather, who followed her as the insurance.

On top of assessing Sakuya's ability, as soon as she failed her assassination attempt, Genou would finish the mission himself.

However, from his perspective, Sakuya's work can be considered as great even without being biased as her grandfather.

Her agility, how she erase her presence, and her resolution.

By standard, her ability is without a doubt first-rate.

However, the target for her mission is exceptionally shrewd.

One can even say that she was unlucky.

Having trained for a longer period, Genou's night vision is much better than Sakuya's.

During the time when Ryouma was explaining his plan to his peers, Genou was watching through small hole he created on the roof of the tent.

(To think he would put his armor on a corpse, and pretend to be a manikin on the side of the tent...)

Ryouma was sitting like a manikin wearing an armor in the corner of the tent.

With the help of darkness, he would be able to catch people off guard.

Then he put the corpse with armor on the bed, and waited for Sakuya to come.

Sakuya, who was unaware of the dummy trap, swung her sword and struck the armor, causing her to stop momentary due to the shock.

With this opening, it was easy for Mikoshiba Ryouma to strike her vital point.

Genou couldn't help but take interest in Ryouma's plan.

"Emm... Ojiji-sama? Why do you want to serve that man?"

Sakuya tried to speak to Genou, who fell silent indulging in his own thought.

Sakuya wants to know the reason even if it incurs her grandfather's wrath.

“Because with him, our wandering fate might be coming to an end soon...”

“Huh?!”

Sakuya couldn't hide her surprise.

Their clan has been wandering around this world for over 500 years.

And now it might be coming to an end?

“What does that mean?”

“You do not need to know yet... It is just a possibility... Now then, enough with the chit-chat, our deadline is in two days. We won't be able to make it in time if we don't hurry.”

After saying that, Genou then proceeded through the forest toward the north.

His destination is 20 km north of Irachion, part of the forest where their clan is camping.

The time he was given was two days.

Even for the two people who have well-trained bodies, two days to make a round trip and hold a discussion with the elders is a pretty tight schedule.

“Understood!”

Sakuya replied, and followed Genou's lead.



Day 172 after being summoned to another world.

“Are you out of your mind?! In the first place, when Sakuya failed her mission, Genou, you should have been the one to finish the mission! That was the reason why we had you tailing Sakuya. And not only did you pull out of the assassination, you decided to serve the target on a whim?!”

One of the elders shouted furiously.

It was a totally understandable reaction.

Even Sakuya, who is sitting beside her grandfather, couldn't help but agree with the elder.

"A-About that..."

Sakuya has things that she wanted to say.

At least, she did not intend to give up on her mission.

She only decided to give up because her grandfather convinced her to.

That was what Sakuya wanted to say.

"Silence! You have no right to make any comment! There wouldn't be a need for this meeting had you not failed your mission in the first place."

Another elder interrupted Sakuya before she could make any comment.

Only angry voices can be heard from the poorly-built cottage.

Normally only the five elders who have the authority over the future of the clan can enter this place.

It is not a place where a low-ranked like Sakuya can freely enter despite being the granddaughter of an elder.

However, since she is the center of the problem this time, she was given an exception.

She is there to testify what happened.

"Well well~, please don't raise your voice like that. It will only hurt your throat. If anything, Sakuya was only following Genou's instruction. As a Genin(low-ranked ninja), that was the right thing to do, so don't be cruel and blame everything on her like that..."

"Well then Genou, you do not seem to have any ill intent. I presume you have your reasons?"

The ones who calmed down the angry elders are the female elders called Oume and Osae

Other than Oume, Osae, and Genou, the other two elders are Ryuusai and Jinouchi; they are the five elders who manage the entire clan.

Although there are disagreements every now and again, since they have been together for a long time, they are able to compromise eventually.

Ryuusai and Jinouchi, both of whom blasted at Sakuya with accusations earlier, reluctantly agreed to at least hear Genou and his granddaughter out.

“Anyway Genou-dono, what Ryuusai-dono has pointed out is also true... Well then, let us hear your explanation for this.”

Oume turned her sharp gaze toward Genou.

“I agree. Surely this can’t be on a whim.”

Following Oume, Osae also turned her face toward Genou.

The two female elders are rational. They are impartial when it comes to judgement.

“That man could be the one our first generation had been searching for all this time...”

The air around them froze up instantly as soon as Genou made his statement.

“Genou-dono is that...”

Shocked expressions appeared on the elders’ faces.

“Is that true? Genou-dono?”

“If that's true then, we... no... we should not waste anymore time! We must welcome him immediately!”

Jinouchi and Ryuusai changed their stances promptly.

All the reactions from the elders left Sakuya perplexed.

“Hold your horses!... I said it is only a possibility did I not?”

““But still!!”“

Ryuusai and Jinouchi couldn't help but be impatient, despite the emphasis from Genou.

“Relax!”

Genou raised his voice.

“Please calm down, gentlemen. Just as Genou-dono said, it is still just a possibility. Genou-dono, are you certain that this person is of the same origin as the first generation?”

“His eyes and hair are black like us, and his skin is yellow-toned. Furthermore, he described Sakuya as a 'Japanese'...It is no doubt that he's someone from Japan, just like the first generation. “

“If that's the case, then that means his origin is not a problem... the problem now is whether he has the quality or not.”

Osae followed up Oume's opinion with her own, after Genou explained Ryouma's features.

“Oume-dono, Osae-dono, if that is the case, then wouldn't it be better for us to welcome him sooner?”

“I agreed what Ryuusai-dono said! If I recall correctly, he's currently in the middle of a fight against Duke Gerhardt? What are you going to do if something were to happen to him? The opportunity of fulfilling our clan's longstanding desire may slip away once again.”

Ryuusai and Jinouchi are bold and assertive,

While Oume and Osae are more conservative and rational.

“Let's us remain patient... If he really is the man the first generation had been searching for, then he will surely survive with his own power.”

“Indeed... We have waited for this for over 500 years; it won't hurt to wait a little more to gauge his quality...”

When three out of five elders agreed to wait, there was no room for Ryuusai and Jinouchi to object.

“First, Sakuya and I will serve that person. Well, it would take time to judge his ability clearly. By the time the war against Duke Gerhardt is over, we should have a clear answer...”

“If Genou-dono said so, then I have no objection.”

“The same goes for me.”

Oume and Osae agreed to Genou's proposal.

“Will you two be alright by yourselves? Why don't you take some young ones from our clan with you?”

“I also agree with Jinouchi-dono. Anything can happen in the battlefield! You'd be better off with more in numbers, don't you agree Genou-dono?”

Ryuusai and Jinouchi do not have a grudge against Genou.

Both of them are only worried of Ryouma's and the two wellbeings.

Because Genou understood their concerns, he did not rebuke them harshly.

“No... Even if we explain the details, that person might not believe me. And if we took the young ones with us, they would want to know the reason as well... Besides, this is still only a possibility. It is too early for us to tell the others.”

In the beginning, this was only an ordinary assassination mission taken by Sakuya.

Just because they are from a clan with Japanese ancestries, it does not necessary mean that Ryouma open up and trust them right away.

Right now, Ryouma's intention is to wait and see.

If Ryouma suspects either of them even for a moment, he might just kill Genou and Sakuya on the spot.

“Indeed... We should avoid causing suspicion. Let’s conclude by leaving the judgement Genou-dono.”

The remaining four people nodded toward Jinouchi's words.

They were desperately trying to suppress their feeling of joy.

Mikoshiba Ryouma could just be the one they have been hoping for.

Chapter 29

Decisive Battle ①

Day 174 after being summoned to the different world.

“Ryouma-sama... Are you sure you can trust them?”

“Hmm? You mean Genou and the others?”

Ryouma said while wiping off his sword.

“What do you think? It shines brightly, doesn’t it?”

Ryouma didn’t answer Laura's question and was looking at the glow of the sword.

“Ryouma-sama!”

“What? You're that dissatisfied?”



Ryouma had no choice but ask such question while flinching back from the angry Laura.

“Yes... Aren't they the assassins that had come to assassinate Ryouma-sama? What is Ryouma-sama going to do if they betray us?”

“Of course I understand such a thing you know? I intend to let them swim freely at the beginning. Well, our plan did end up going out of order though.”

“Try to say that again! Is it because of that katana? Is it?!”

Laura glared at the katana that was given to Ryouma by Genou.

“Well! That's not unrelated indeed! Definitely!”

Ryouma admitted without hesitation.

Because he thought it's no use to deceive her.

“Besides, didn't they already return within the deadline given by me?”

After Ryouma said that, Laura couldn't find the words to rebuke him more.

After all, among them, it was only Ryouma who believed that Genou and the other one would come back.

At the time Genou and Sakuya wanted to report to their clan, Ryouma let them do so willingly.

Laura, Sara, Lione, and Bolts had strongly protested, but Ryouma didn't listen to them.

They were not sure whether Sakuya and Genou were going to serve Ryouma for real, not to mention the possibility of them just running away.

Giving up on the assassination is one thing, but if they haven't yet given up on the assassination, then it is without a doubt it would be more convenient for them if they are near their target Ryouma.

“Well yes, they've already returned, but...”

Even after talking to Ryouma, Laura's expression kept showing discontent.

Of course, it's not weird for her to do so.

The Marfisto sisters have acted together with Ryouma for nearly six months, and their journey together makes their loyalty toward Ryouma quite high.

Of course, they are not following Ryouma blindly.

They think and act according to their own will.

They respect Ryouma's will as long it is not harmful to himself. The sisters would assertively give him advice and also reprimand him when it is necessary,

because they know that Mikoshiba Ryouma is not an invincible hero, despite being a strong and wise man.

(I don't care even if I end up being hated. I don't care even if I end up being neglected... It is our duty to point out Ryouma-sama's blind spots and make him aware of things.)

That is the thought process the girls had imposed on themselves.

And Ryouma understood what the sisters had in mind.

That's why Ryouma trusts the sisters.

"Well~, I can understand Laura's concern, and I think it is the correct thing to have such a concern. But right now, the people I genuinely trust are only you girls... You understand this, don't you?"

Laura nodded her head to Ryouma's question.

Both Laura and Sara fully understood that their current situation couldn't be described as satisfying.

"But then... the knights and their position should be the same. Why did you trust them so much? If it's like this then isn't it alright to trust the knight as well?"

She was referring to the Knights under his command given by the Princess and the assassins that had come to take his life.

From Laura's perspective, the Knights provided by the Princess are much more

trustworthy.

Sara, currently guiding Genou and Sakuya to their designated tent, also has the same opinion as her...

Although the knights and those two don't have much of a difference in terms of trustworthiness, at least the knights won't aim for Ryouma's life without the Princess command.

However, contrary to Laura's concern, Ryouma seems to trust Genou and Sakuya more than the knights.

"Well, they might be similar in regards of their trustworthiness, but Laura, you're wrong about one thing... But, I'll leave it to you to figure out on your own as homework"

"Homework?"

"Yes, you can also discuss it with Sara or Lione and think about it together... As for Bolts, I guess you can't discuss it with him. He seems to understand the reason why after all."

Recently, Ryouma had begun to say this sort of thing, the purpose of it being to make Laura and her sister able to think outside of the box and increase their analytical capability.

Because the number of the pieces in Ryouma's hands are limited, he has to raise the strength of each piece.

Making the girls think about why Ryouma took such an action will make them obtain a better understanding of the situation and other things as well. It will also help them understand the personality of Mikoshiba Ryouma, making them closer to him, and thus killing two birds with one stone.

As for Bolts, since he has more life experience, as one would expect he has rich wisdom.

Ryouma ultimately did not tell the girls his reasons, and letting them figure it out is proof that he's a good commander. And of course, other than that Ryouma also wants to hear the sister's opinions.

"Understood... But, it's really not because they gave you that sword, right?"

Laura once again gazed at the sword in Ryouma's hand.

“Haa~, why don't you trust me more? Do you think I'm someone who would trust another person just because they give me some sword?”

Saying that, Ryouma shook his head as if saying “good grief!”

Unfortunately for him, Laura’s pestering didn’t end there.

Looking at the spear standing in the corner of the tent and still doubting him, Laura continued on.

“If I'm not mistaken, that spear is also a gift from them, right? Not just the sword.”

The spear had a shape that Laura had never seen before.

Spears commonly used in the western continent mostly have a straight spearhead shaped the same as a sword.

There are also some other types, such as the Halberd, with the spearhead shaped like an axe.

However, she had never seen a cross-shaped spearhead like this one.

And when she looked closely, the handle seemed to be made of iron.

“W-Well, i did also get that cross-shaped spear from them... But that doesn’t mean that I trust them, okay?”

Ryouma’s words sounded like a sore loser making some excuse and Laura had to try hard not to laugh.

The more he explained it, the more it ended up sounding like an excuse.

“Well, fine. If Ryouma-sama has made his decision, then we're not going to object.”

After saying that, Laura bowed to Ryouma and left the tent.

Laura decided that there was nothing more to say about it.

Even if Ryouma ends up getting deceived, Laura is already ready for the consequences.

Her resolve was to protect Ryouma, even if she has to use her own body as a shield.

“Did I make her angry?”

Ryouma, finding himself left alone, awkwardly muttered to himself.

He had noticed recently that Laura and Sara are very similar to his cousin, Asuka.

Whenever they give their opinions to Ryouma, they resemble her.

“Well, whatever... Since it’s also true that I was fascinated by the gift...”

Indeed, the katana that Genou had given to him as a gift was better than he had expected.

The blade is thicker, and thus has more force.

The length is also suitable for use on the battlefield.

Although he was happy to have both weapons, he was still going to need Genou to perform maintenance and sharpening after using them in battle.

Ryouma did not have the knowledge of how to perform maintenance and sharpening after battles.

And especially with sharpening, it’s absolutely necessary to leave it to the specialist.

If you were to use the sword in battle, it would get chipped, and if you were to cut a person, the sharpness would fall due to the human blood and fat.

Not to mention too that when you cut a person, blood will also enter the sword's tang where the blacksmith put their mark, thus also requiring proper maintenance.

If not, the blood will corrode that part.

He's not looking for high value or a work of art, so he did not care about the beauty of the blade’s crest or the sword’s guard, he just needs a sharp sword.

With that being the case, him being unable to take care of the katana himself disqualifies it as a weapon.

But because Genou is able to fulfill that job, Ryouma honestly feels relieved.

“I wonder if it was worth it to make such terms...”

After listening to Genou's request, Ryouma placed some conditions on him, one of them being to give the katana to him.

Although he had seen Sakuya's katana, the katana that was given to him is even better than hers, exceeding his expectations.

“Well! Even if I said that, I definitely didn't believe them because of this...”

Ryouma felt thankful to Genou for giving him the katana and the spear.

Ryouma's grandfather had trained Ryouma to make him a warrior capable of wielding both sword and spear.

Although all of his battle knowledge can be applied to swords and spears from this world, it's even better for him to use the katana and cross-shaped spear which he is more familiar with.

However, Ryouma is not naive enough to trust Genou just because he had given him some good weapons.

(Well, I just have to pray that they won't do anything unnecessary until the decisive battle against Duke Gerhardt is finished... The problem now is how much has my plan actually worked... It's been five days since we repulsed Kyle's army, but there's still no movement from Duke Gerhardt's side... Is it because my plan worked perfectly, or is it because he's doing something... Either way, two more days and the army lead by Princess Lupis will arrive. Will the decisive battle happen sooner than I had anticipated?)

Ryouma does not believe in God.

But for now, he wants to at least pray for victory in the upcoming battles against Duke Gerhardt.

-The sun slowly sinks into the horizon-



“Is the organizing not done yet?!”

Duke Gerhardt's roaring voice resounded inside his office.

After Kyle's defeat, Duke Gerhardt had issued a mobilization order to all of the nobles.

In addition to the 30 thousand soldiers initially collected at Irachion, he was also planning to integrate the soldiers from the other nobles.

He gave them the order to organize in two days.

However, the nobles are gathering slower than he had expected.

No, the problems were not limited to the nobles.

“Not yet... We ran into more problems than expected...”

His aide standing at his side give the report, while Duke Gerhardt's anger rained down on him.

“Fools! What have you been doing all this time! Three days have already passed since I issued the order! Threaten the nobles if necessary and tell them that they have to bring their soldiers to Irachion by tomorrow!”

“That is... The problem is not just coming from the nobility...”

The aide frantically lowered his head.

When you've been given an order and are unable to execute it properly, you have to take responsibility for its failure.

If he's unable to adequately explain why the order failed, he might lose his head.

“What are you talking about?! What's the problem then?!”

Duke Gerhardt's aide nervously explained the problem.

And it turned out that the problem was far worse than Duke Gerhardt had expected.

(What the heck is happening! Why don't the peasants want to go to wars so suddenly?! I even promised them that they can loot as much as they want!)

Having heard the report from his aide, Duke Gerhardt sank deeply in his chair in confusion.

(No, I think I know the cause... It must be that man...)

The name of the man on Duke Gerhardt's mind was Mikoshiba Ryouma.

He got Ryouma's name from the report of his aide.

After Kyle had lost 5.000 men in a single battle, 60.000 men were what was left of Duke Gerhardt's military strength.

This number Duke Gerhardt got after he included the nobles and the peasants he had drafted.

The problem here is that Irachion does not have the production capacity to maintain 60.000 army troops.

Realistically, no city in this nation could permanently accommodate such a large amount of soldiers.

It would be different if it were in a city of a larger country like the Ortomea Empire, but in Rozeria Kingdom it's impossible.

In other words, Duke Gerhardt can only accommodate those 60.000 troops for a limited time.

And now, even after Duke Gerhardt issued his mobilization order to attack Ryouma, only 2.000 soldiers turned up.

All of his efforts are focused on taking back the ground that Ryouma's forces gained in order to prevent Princess Lupis' forces from rushing into his territory.

For the sake of winning against Princess Lupis, it is necessary to crush Ryouma.

However, the mobilization order he had issued ended up having almost no effect,

because of the rumor circulated among the peasants.

It was then spread to the surrounding rural areas and the other nobles' territories around Irachion.

(Kyle, you bastard! How far are you going to drag me down!)

Gerhardt cursed at Kyle in his mind.

Had Kyle been standing in front of him, he would definitely have killed him with his own hands.

That is how much he was outraged by the situation.

Ryouma's flood plan had eliminated 5.000 of the 7.000 lives in the attacking force.

This fact was then exaggerated and spread throughout Irachion.

"Oi! Did you hear? I heard that Kyle-sama lost!"

"Yeah I heard he lost against an army four times smaller?"

"It seems so! Most of the commanders ended up dead, you know?"

"T-That can't be..."

"Oi! Did you hear the enemy commander's name?"

"Indeed! He's called the cold-blooded demon, Mikoshiba Ryouma!"

"What the heck?! A demon? That sounds so stupid!"

"Fool! That's not the problem! I heard that he used the Thaves river to drown the soldiers!"

"Is that true? Did he use magic? No, no way, is it even possible to do that?"

"That's why he's a demon!"

This wild rumor spread among the populace.

It was a rumor that Ryouma would smile upon hearing, However, for the peasants, it was something terrifying.

After all the demon they are talking about is their enemy.

“Oi... Isn't this bad?”

“Indeed. I've heard that he won't show any mercy toward his enemies.”

“You know, I heard that he killed prisoners of war with a smile on his face.”

Facts and lies mixed together, creating an image of Ryouma as a demon.

Then, the mobilization order came amidst such rumors.

The only people willing to volunteer after hearing these things were the more daring ones.

As a result, despite having ordered mobilization multiple times, Duke Gerhardt was only able to amass 30.000 strong men.

“Damn it!”

Duke Gerhardt said resentfully.

The situation had grown worse beyond anything Duke Gerhardt had anticipated.

He had even ordered his adjutant to conscript soldiers from the surrounding villages forcibly, but it was doubtful that he would manage to gather the planned 60.000 men like this.

“If I can get 50.000, it should be alright... No... will I even manage to gather that much?”

If he forcibly conscripts people from the village too much, they might run away.

That is the extent of how many problems Mikoshiba Ryouma's name and reputation had caused.

In terms of the soldiers' quality, it would be impossible to win against Princess Lupis with what the Duke has.

Because of this, he aims to win the war using numbers instead.

However, the all-important soldiers won't gather under him despite his mobilization order.

“It can't be... Was this the enemy's plan all along?”

This ominous thought came to Gerhardt's mind.

Kyle's loss is a fact.

However, how were the details of the battle spread amongst the citizens? That is what Duke Gerhardt was wondering.

The situation has turned disadvantageous for Duke Gerhardt.

He's frustrated enough to want to strangle God to death for it.

But, what if it's true? That all of this is the enemy commander's plan?

What if his aim was not only blocking 7.000 soldiers but a much bigger army?

What if the purpose of the flood was not just to drown the soldiers?

And finally, what if the one who spread the rumor was Mikoshiba Ryouma himself?

“No... That can't be... Such a thing is impossible! If something like that were true, then it's as if he's a demon with clairvoyance!”

Gerhardt shook off the fear that appeared in his mind.

But the fear of the man named Mikoshiba Ryouma has already settled in his heart.

Chapter 30

Decisive Battle ②

Day 175 after being summoned to another world.

“Sudou... Please lend me your wisdom.”

Irachion’s castle had been dyed red by the setting sun and within one of its rooms Duke Gerhardt lowered his head to a hooded man.

“Duke-sama, please raise your head. A noble person like you should not have to lower your head to commoner like me.”

The tone was very courteous but such tone left an impression that the man was disgustingly polite.

“I beg you! I have no one else to depend on but you!”

Usually, it was unimaginable for Duke Gerhardt to lower his head like this and hidden by the hood was Sudou’s sneering face, since the cause of Duke Gerhardt sudden gestures began like this.

Because the reason why Duke Gerhardt lowered his head like this.

This story all began in the morning.



“Are you seriously going to replace me and command the army instead?! Hodram!”

“Of course... Since you took command, even in battles where the situation is favourable to us, you have lost. Don’t you understand your situation, your Excellency Duke Gerhardt.”

“You bastard! For someone who ran away from the enemy what nonsense are you spouting!”

The meeting to decide the future of duke Gerhardt and Hodram had turned sour where the peaceful atmosphere was now slowly filling with pressure from both of them.

“However, if I'm the one who takes command, we can win you know? This might sound rude, but I don't see any talent of commanding an army inside of Duke Gerhardt. With that being the case, isn't it better for me to do so?”

Initially, Duke Gerhardt was thinking of using Hodram by only giving him only some rights of a commander...

However, for Hodram, does not want an inexperienced person standing as the commander.

After all, it would be more efficient if he took command by himself.

The meeting turns into chaos due to Hodram nonchalantly brushing off Duke Gerhardt's suggestion.

“What are you saying! Within Duke Gerhardt army, there are lots of good warriors! There's no need to leave the command to Hodram-dono!” One of Duke Gerhardt's adjutant retorted.

“Hou? This is the first time I'm hearing this but despite anything you say, you still lost to an army even with an army four times larger. If the person you're talking about is strong like Kyle then I expect that he's someone with average abilities.”

Hodram plainly ridiculed Duke Gerhardt's way of command by comparing his abilities as a leader to be poorer than Kyle, this left the adjutant speechless.

“T-That is...”

“In the first place, appointing such an incompetent person as a military commander also show how bad Duke Gerhardt's ability is, no?”

“Wha-!”

“How rude!”

Listening to Hodram's remark, Duke Gerhardt's adjutants got angry.

“Hou? I just pointed out the truth so that they can understand your ability, right? Your Excellency Duke Gerhardt!”

Hodram’s tone of voice was filled with ridicule and although it was in a polite manner, it was filled with a rude intent directed at Duke Gerhardt.

“You bastard... What are you aiming?” Duke Gerhardt asked Hodram.

(How? How can he be so confident? He was only able to bring 2,000 of his knights and even though he knows that I have more 20,000, how is he so confident?)

It is true that Mikoshiba Ryouma's existence caused the situation around Duke Gerhardt to turn sour. However, Duke Gerhardt couldn’t understand, why Hodram was able to show such confidence.

“I was hoping to win this war. Everything I do is for the sake of winning.”

(That much I can understand... There must be something more, something I’m missing!)

In all fairness, what Hodram had said is true.

From the point of view who has the most commanding ability then Hodram stand above.

But then,

“I agree with General Hodram opinion!”

The conflict was broken by the man sitting in the corner of the room.

““““Wha-!”““““

All eyes turned towards the man.

“Did none of you hear what I said? Then let me say it once again! I said I suggest leaving full command to General Hodram.”

The meeting room turned silent all of sudden.

Noone had an immediate reply.

“What are you doing? Are you betraying me? Kyle!”

Duke Gerhardt's voice is flat and cold.

With Kyle showing approval toward Hodram suggestion.

Duke Gerhardt was unable to suppress his anger anymore.

“What are you saying! your Excellency! I'm doing my best to do my duty you know!”

“What did you say?”

Gerhardt asked Kyle.

“In the first place, I join Duke Gerhardt because you wanted my military talents! That's why I want Duke Gerhardt to win this war!”

Kyle then looks around at the nobles inside the meeting room.

“That's why, since we're facing an enemy that can even beat me, we should leave command to a person who's better than even me!”

“K-Kyle... You bastard!”

Gerhardt understood what Kyle's aim.

(This bastard... He's planning on changing sides, that's why he is trying to curry some favor with Hodram! Damn it! I should've never allowed him to attend this meeting!)

Kyle who realizes that he had lost Duke Gerhardt trust due to his previous defeat ran for self-protection.

One can say that this is a blunder for Duke Gerhardt since even though Duke Gerhardt had received the report of his previous defeat, Duke Gerhardt still let Kyle attend the meeting.

Duke Gerhardt never expected Kyle to notice, that Duke Gerhardt wanted to use Kyle as much as possible until the

(Damn it! Why did I let Kyle attend this meeting!)

Duke Gerhardt's gaze was directed toward his adjutant who is sitting next to him.

Like this, the situation turns worse for Duke Gerhardt.

He can't blame the adjutant. After all, his adjutant had advised him to punish Kyle, instead he decides to postpone the punishment and also did not forbid Kyle from attending the meeting.

This is the result of it.

The treatment toward Kyle still the same as before, and only his punishment end up being postponed.

He should never let Kyle attend the meeting with Hodram.

Furthermore, this meeting was where they had to decide the direction their faction was heading to.

“Hou! So you're Kyle-dono! I guess I can't rely on rumors only. I never thought that you're someone who was able to judge the situation.”

“Your praise is too generous for me.”

The mouth that had ridiculed Kyle until recently is spouting words which were the complete opposite now...

And although Kyle was around when Hodram ridiculed his abilities, he acted as though it was never mentioned.

“I see... If Kyle-sama said that much then I also agree!”

“Wha-!”

“This can't be! What are you saying Earl Aldeheid!”

Gerhardt asked the person who show an agreement toward Kyle's suggestion.

Duke Gerhardt's adjutant's face turns pale.

It was a natural reaction. After all, the one who agreed was the second most powerful person in the noble faction.

In other words, the right-hand man of Duke Gerhardt who had supported him for many years had approved Hodram leadership.

“Don't be mistaken. Duke Gerhardt... We're responsible for our vassals after all so I can't just sit down and wait for our deaths to come.”

His tone of voice seems to indicate that he had made a difficult choice, but Duke Gerhardt was not going to be deceived.

For many years, the Earl had exploited Rozeria Kingdom.

Vassals?

Gerhardt had known the Earl for sometime and in that span of time he never once heard of the Earl having such admirable thoughts.

But, if the Earl shows such a regretful face and voice, the surrounding will easily be deceived by it.

(This... This is hopeless...)

While hostility and anger dominating his heart, Gerhardt tries to calm his mind and assess the situation.

He thought that if Earl Aldeheid the second most influential person within the faction approve Hodram leadership, then it would be just a waste of time for him to argue more.

In a matter of fact, the nobles within nobles' faction seem to have approved Hodram leadership.

“Well then! With this, I will lead the soldiers!”

The meeting ended with Hodram uttered those words.

Leaving Duke Gerhardt to sit in silence in his chair.



“I'm begging you Sudou! I can only depend on you! Please!”

Sudou is looking at Duke Gerhardt with cold eyes.

Disregarding his appearance, Duke Gerhardt clung on Sudou for help.

'Kyle or Hodram huh?', that is what inside Sudou's mind

Sudou is not sure what had happened, but he can see that as the result of the meeting, it has become clear that Duke Gerhardt has lost his faction.

Understanding that Princess Lupis main army is closing in, Duke Gerhardt is cornered.

(This is the man that holds the position of prime minister of Rozeria Kingdom? The moment he lost in power struggle, all that remains is trash eh...)

Within his mind, Sudou was scorning Duke Gerhardt.

(Speaking of influential people, the moment a person falls from power, that person would end up alone huh? Well, I guess this is what we call politics.)

However, for Sudou, to achieve his mission he can't just ignore Duke Gerhardt.

At least for now...

(In order to fulfill the mission from my home country, in half a year... Well, I will make use of this guy, I guess I need to take a few measures huh?...)

“Please rest assured Duke Gerhardt. I will try to help you...”

Sadou gently grasps Duke Gerhardt's hand.

“Ooh! R-Really? Will you really help me?! But, right now my situation is...”

His usual high handed attitude had disappeared completely.

Sadou thought that he might lick his shoes if he ordered him to.

“It's alright... I have a solution.”

“What! You have a solution for this situation?!”

Duke Gerhardt's tone had returned to his usual in a blink of an eye revealing that the humble and servile attitude he donned just moments ago was nothing more than an act.

However, Sudou did not care about Gerhardt's attitude.

“Well, but your Excellency will have to pay all the burdens alright?”

Hearing Sudou's words Duke Gerhardt's face darkened.

“Pay... Is it money? Or power? It can't be, my head?”

(This bastard... Even while he's in the middle of such crisis, he still cares about his personal greed?)

Sadou shook his head as he felt amazed towards the creature called nobles.

“It's fine without your neck. I can't do anything unless you give up all your money and power.”

“Foolish! Then there would be no meaning!”

“No no, that is not the case. I did say to give it up, but it doesn't mean we are just going

to give it up so easily..."

Duke Gerhardt's expression change.

"What do you mean?"

"Right now, Duke Gerhardt has very little cards to play after General Hodram robbed you of your authority over the army..."

"I'm aware of that without you telling me!"

Hearing Sudou's words, Gerhardt raises his voice, feeling that Sudou was mocking him and rubbing salt on his wounds for his failure.

"But, I can say that this can actually be considered as a stroke of good luck."

"What did you say? What does that mean?! Hodram stole my authority from me and you call that lucky?!"

"To be honest, the enemy's commander is quite powerful. Plainly speaking, there's no chance of winning here."

"What! You bastard!"

Gerhardt shoots his gaze toward Sudou as if trying to kill him with it.

"Please listen first."

Sudou did not change his tone of voice.

But it was evident that the atmosphere has changed.

The air filled with a bloodthirst.

Sadou's words immediately return Gerhardt's mind back.

"S-Sorry..."

Words of apology come out from Gerhardt's mouth.

“Let me continue explaining it. Although I'm half in doubt, it was quite a feat with how the enemy's commander defeated Kyle by drowning him. His information manipulation is also good. “

“Information manipulation? You mean those rumors?”

“Yes. The rumors were clearly the enemy commander's doing...”

“As expected... It's true huh...”

Gerhardt seems to have also noticed it.

“Do you think General Hodram can defeat an enemy that is capable of drawing such detailed plan? It is obvious that the enemy should still have some trump cards in his hand?”

“Really?!”

“Indeed. If it was me, I would definitely have one hidden...”

Gerhardt felt like the face is hidden behind the hood was laughing.

“Then what are we going to do?! Should we tell Hodram about it?!”

Gerhardt's response was one that anyone would naturally come to but considering Gerhardt's current predicament, even by doing so, he wouldn't be able to get everything back. This was something Gerhardt failed to realize.

Sudou denied his proposal by shaking his head.

“If we do that, it would be useless. Rather than doing that, I will make use of it.”

“Make use of it? What do you mean?”

“Leave it as it is, and let General Hodram lose against Princess Lupis.”

“Such foolishness! If that were to happen then everything would be over!!”

Although this side has Princess Ladine as justification, from Princess Lupis perspective,

this is only a rebellion and since Gerhardt was the mastermind of such a rebellion, if Princess Lupis were to win the war he would without a doubt be held accountable and take responsibility for his actions thus far.

Sudou shook his head once more.

“That is fine. We can push all responsibility to Hodram.”

“What did you say?!”

“After all your leadership has been taken over. Thus, let's make the most out of this situation.”

Gerhardt felt that a frightening smile appeared on Sudou's face.

“But, is that even possible? But, the fact that I had gathered the army won't change...”

“No... Indeed that is true. However, we still can alleviate the responsibility. Even Princess Lupis would need to execute someone as the mastermind of the civil war. Normally Duke Gerhardt would be the one...”

“I see! But right now Hodram is here...”

“Exactly. If there are two people that can be executed as the mastermind, one of them should be able to negotiate for their life.”

“But... Is there something we have that will make Princess Lupis spare my life?”

'There's no way that she would spare the mastermind,' that is what Gerhardt had thought.

It is probably impossible for Gerhardt to capture Hodram and present it to Princess Lupis either.

Sudou keeps insisting despite Gerhardt's suffering.

“You do have it no? In that dungeon.”

“Dungeon? Dungeon, Dungeon!”

Toward Sudou's words, Gerhardt remembered a certain human.

“But still... Is it really worth that much?”

As Sudou had said. Indeed it can be used as a negotiation tool but Gerhardt was doubting if it really was worthy enough to make the Princess spare his life.

“What are you saying... Don't worry about it. Princess Lupis will definitely respond to the negotiation.”

From behind the hood, Gerhardt can hear he's laughing and he couldn't help but nod his head while feeling anxious in the coming days. Right now he was in a desperate situation and as the big battle approaches, no one would be able to foresee the outcome of it.

Chapter 31

Decisive Battle ③

Day 176 day after being summoned to another world.

The Sun rises above the horizon, marked the seventh day since the mission started. Princess Lupis' main force are supposed to arrive today.

Ryouma stood by the Thaves river bank and looked toward the opposite shore.

He sees the first group, led by Elena, is about to cross the river.

"Nothing happened, huh..."

"Indeed... I was expecting a night raid, but Duke Gerhardt did not make any move. I wonder what happened..."

Sara's remark left Ryouma pondering.

Judging from the result of the battle against Kyle, it was a logical to think that Duke Gerhardt would want to retaliate.

However, the enemy's main army never show up.

Last night, Ryouma and co braced themselves for a possible night raid from the enemy's main force. The troops were on high alert all night, but nothing happened in the end.

And now Princess Lupis' main force has arrived as scheduled.

"Could it be because of the rumor Ryouma-sama spreaded?"

"Indeed. While I'm positive that the rumour will have a significant effect, there is no way that this alone would reduce the total number of enemy to zero. At most, I expect no more than 30% reduction in enemy force."

Just like Sara had pointed out, the rumor Ryouma spreaded was effective.

However, there are still many measures Duke Gerhardt can use to recruit soldiers.

He can threaten with brute force,

Offer them with money,

Or perhaps a combination of both.

Some peasants would be forced to join despite their reluctance.

Of course, the rumor can reduce their numbers. However, not to the point where the Duke cannot recruit at all.

Ryouma does not doubt the effectiveness of his strategy. He is simply being realistic.

“Is there still no movement at Irachion?”

“Yes, the reconnaissance unit is keeping the city under close monitor. If they make any movement, then we should know about it right away.”

“If they were planning to attack us while our main force is in the middle of crossing the river then, they won't arrive here in time if they don't depart now.”

Toward Sara's answer, Ryouma looked puzzled.

“If that is the case, then... Are they trying to attack us on the plain?”

“Decisive Battle, huh?”

Between Ryouma's camping location and Irachion, there's a field sandwiched in between two forests.

The plain area is especially large, as it is a place where wheat is produced.

Within Rozeria Kingdom, Irachion is one of the most resourceful territory that generates a lot of income.

However, it would undoubtedly turn into ash if the land becomes the battlefield.

But looking at the Duke's movement, it is likely that he plans to use this place for the decisive battle.

If Princess Lupis' main force can cross the river without any intervention, then there

is nothing else the Duke can do to cause Ryouma worry.

The plain is a perfect place to organise a large army. However, considering the consequent of the battle, there is no doubt that this valuable land will be severely damaged. It is a terrible place to hold a battle from a country-governing perspective.

Thinking that, Ryouma felt something was off.

(This is too fishy... I feel something is wrong... As if someone is pulling the strings from behind the scene...)

The more Ryouma thinks about the situation, the more he becomes suspicious.

(But... Looking at the Duke's movement, It feels like he is not exactly aiming for the win... What's going on...?)

“Ryouma-sama?”

Sara called out Ryouma’s name as he spaced out.

“Ah... My bad, I have something in mind...”

“No, if I'm in the way, should I leave?”

“Don't worry about it. It was something trivial anyway... Has Sara considered the possibility that this could turn into a siege battle?”

Ryouma changed the topic.

(I guess I might have overthink this, huh? I should forget about it for now, until things go sour.....)

Ryouma calculated the possible gains and losses in his mind while giving Sara a question.

“Siege battle? I think that’s very unlikely.”

Smile appeared on Ryouma's face after hearing Sara's response.

From the start, Ryouma has never considered that possibility at all.

Because judging by the city scale, it is impossible to host the tens of thousands of soldiers.

In other words, the city does not have sufficient power to maintain even if they managed to gather the soldiers.

Ryouma predicted that they can hold up to half a month at most.

“It would be impossible to fight Princess Lupis from inside the city alone. If we include the citizen and the soldiers, they will run out of supplies by around the end of the month.”

Sara continued.

A siege battle would be difficult without using a large number of troops.

However, supplies would run out if they gathered too much.

In the end, Duke Gerhardt can only use maximum force to wage a short battle.

However, the same can be said for Princess Lupis too.

Feeling satisfied, Ryouma nodded toward Sara's words with a smile.

In the past several months, the sisters have shown considerable improvement at strategy and analysis.

By improving in this area, Ryouma's chance of survival has increased as well.

“Ryouma-sama! Elena-sama and her unit of 3,000 Knights have crossed the river.”

“Understood. Please guide Elena-san to my tent, and tell the others to rest.”

After instructing the reporting Knight, Ryouma returned to his tent with Sara.

This is where the real deal begins...



“You've completed an impossible feat... To create such impressive fortification...”

Elena had nothing but words of admiration for Ryouma.

“It was nothing praiseworthy...”

“A humble one, aren't you? At least, this isn't something I can do... I'm sure her highness the princess would be very surprised too.”

Ryouma shrugged his shoulders as Elena continued to shower him with praises.

“On the contrary, I'm afraid that I might have disappointed the princess instead...”



Elena showed a perplexed expression.

As far as Elena see, this was the best result they could have hoped for. Why would the princess be disappointed?

The answer is, there is one small flaw in what otherwise was a perfect result.

That one flaw is the loss of Mikhail Banashu.

Ryouma decided to report everything to Elena.

There is no use in keeping it a secret, as it would only raise her suspicion and eventually lose her trust afterwards.

“I see... so Mikhail is...”

“Well I've not confirmed his dead body yet, but at least I've not seen him since the reconnaissance mission... While he made a grave mistake of ignoring my order, since he is the Princess' aide.....”

Elena sighed involuntarily.

(This is bad... Indeed, this could turn into a big problem...)

She feels Ryouma's concern is very justified.

Since Mikhail was the one who found Ryouma, the princess assigned him to supervise the newcomer by working closely under Ryouma.

With Princess Lupis entrusting the control of her soldiers with Ryouma, she cannot risk any possibility of betrayal.

Other than Meltina, Mikhail is the only other person with the same level of loyalty that can be relied on.

That is why Princess Lupis trusts Mikhail.

Even though it was Mikhail fault for neglecting orders, the fact remains that he died under Ryouma's command.

Despite no clear confirmation of his death, the probability of being alive is rather bleak.

Regardless of the battle outcome, from the princess' perspective, she has lost an important servant.

If the princess can understand that this is a result of war, then there would be no problem.

However, in the worst case scenario, she might think it was Ryouma who killed Mikhail instead.

"I sure hope I'm overthinking this."

Elena wished she could tell him "yes" right away. However, this matter is far too complicated to simply laugh it off.

But, realistically speaking, Ryouma's concern is very possible.

"No... But we still have to report it, no?"

"Certainly... Well, that's why I decided to consult with Elena-san first."

If Ryouma actually killed Mikhail, there is no way the other 1500 Knights would have followed him.

As for Elena, the fact that Ryouma had secured the beachhead is already a proof of Ryouma's innocent.

However, despite all these concrete proofs, there is no telling whether the princess would accept the outcome.

Both Ryouma and Elena are not closely associated with Princess Lupis.

Their relationship is simply a princess and her retainers.

Other than during the meetings between them, there is no contact between Ryouma and the princess whatsoever.

And Princess Lupis' trust in Ryouma does not extend to the point where she could

allow him free control of her army. Hence the reason why Mikhail went sent as an insurance.

“Very well... I shall be the one to report this matter...”

Elena decided to volunteer herself.

Regardless how justified Ryouma is, there is a chance that the princess still takes it as a lie.

However, if Elena is the one who explains the situation, Princess Lupis won't judge it emotionally because she's someone unrelated.

“Sorry to make you do this, Elena-san. And thank you.”

Ryouma quickly understood Elena's intention and offered his gratitude.

“It's fine. We cannot afford to have you dismissed right now... Let's see... You should take the duty of reorganising the army. I will bring up the subject to the princess tonight. Well, someone has to do this anyway.”

Elena allocated her work to Ryouma.

To make a reason for Ryouma not reporting directly to the Princess.

“Understood... Well then.”

Elena breathes a deep sigh while looking at the back figure of Ryouma who was leaving the tent.

“Now then... I wonder how should I report this... No, I should not report it directly. Perhaps it would be safer if I talk to Meltina first.”

Although there is no direct correlation between this incident and the result of the future battles, if she were to make a wrong move right now and cause distrust between the princess and Ryouma, the rest of the plan will undoubtedly fall apart.

“As expected, I should speak to Meltina first...”

As she made her decision, Elena walked to the dock to meet Meltina, who is on the verge of arriving with the second unit.



'Unnn..."

Meltina let out an inevitable sigh.

“As I said, it was not Ryouma’s fault that this happened.”

“No, I understand that... It's just...”

“Just what?”

Elena's grew impatient as Meltina hesitated.

“You see, Mikhail served the princess as her personal guard since she was a young child... It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say his bond with the princess goes a long way back...”

Elena's expression changed instantly upon hearing Meltina’s explanation.

The development is indeed just like what Ryouma had feared.

“As expected, would the princess have doubts on Ryouma?”

“No, I don't think so... I doubt the princess will blame everything on Ryouma, but she will, without a doubt, be greatly saddened by this...”

Meltina immediately ruled out the worst possible outcome that Elena was concerned about

Even Meltina understood that the last thing they want happened is for the princess to lose her trust in Ryouma.

After all, the Princess’ chance of victory in this war depends heavily on Mikoshiba

Ryouma's strategies.

“Then would it be better for us to leave the reporting to the princess to you?”

“Yes... I shall be the one to report this matter to her Highness...”

Meltina nodded her head toward Elena's question.



At night, when all the 23.000 soldiers led by Princess Lupis have successfully crossed the river.

The camping area is being quickly expanded.

Princess Lupis' tent is also one of the many tents that was recently built.

“Mikhail...”

The Princess muttered Mikhail's name softly as she lays on her bed.

“Mikhail... Didn't you say that you would protect me forever...”

Upon hearing the news of Mikhail's death from Meltina, memories of the time they spent time together when they were young begins to reappear in her head one after another.

Streaks of tear streamed down on her beautiful face, like droplets of pearl.

After receiving the report from Meltina, Princess Lupis tried her best to put up a tough front.

As a princess, she refuses to blame Ryouma for it.

In all fairness, from a strategic point of view, there was nothing wrong with Ryouma's command.

It is in fact Mikhail who was at fault for ignoring the order and led 500 knights to their annihilation.

The princess understands that much.

It was a sensible conclusion.

Yet her heart just could not accept such outcome.

As a result, Princess Lupis headed back to her tent from dinner party earlier than scheduled.

Because she was well aware that she could have directed all her anger and disappointment onto Ryouma had she stayed any longer.

“Aah... Mikhail... You promised me that you are going to take me as your bride...”

Since Princess Lupis is a royalty and he's merely a knight, of course, she has never considered this as serious.

A childhood promise is usually nothing but children's fantasy.

However, memories of the time they had spent together begins to resurface one after another.

“You even promised that you will always be by my side...”

For Princess Lupis, Meltina and Mikhail are her two most trustworthy vassals.

In fact, it was Mikhail who made the proposal to suppress General Holdram's ambitious plans.

For Princess Lupis, Meltina can be considered as her sister, while Mikhail is her elder brother or a father figure.

The sorrow she is experiencing is even greater than when her biological father, King Farst the Second, passed away.

After all, the relationship between the late king and Lupis is more of a king and a princess, rather than father and child.

“Hou~ ... It seems you're very upset, as I expected. Your Highness Lupis.”

Suddenly, an unknown man's voice spoke out of nowhere.

“Who’s there!? An assassin?! Is there anyone?! Somebody!”

Princess Lupis tried to raise her voice immediately.

It is unknown as to how he entered the tent, but there should be a few knights guarding around her tent.

And they should have responded immediately after hearing her voice.

However, no matter how long she waits, no one answered her call.

“It's useless, your Highness. Because right now, they are asleep due to my sleep magic.”

As the man spoke, Princess Lupis begins to grasp the situation.

She pulled out the sword near her bed.

“You do not look like an assassin. State your purpose!”

No assassin would talk with their victim.

But it does not mean that he's not a threat.

Until she finds out his motive, she's not willing to put her guard down.

“Purpose huh... Let's see... Since we do not have the time, I'll be frank... I came here to talk business with you.”

The princess' tension loosened after hearing the man's words.

“What do you want? In the first place, who are you? How are you able to enter here?”

The man slowly revealed his face hidden under the hood.

“I'm sorry for the late introduction. My name is Sudou, Sudou Akitake.”

Sudou lowered his head as he introduced himself.

To show that he does not have any hostile intentions.



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